The Advent

There is only one way of being right, but there are many ways of being wrong.

The Mother

The ADVENT

November 1947

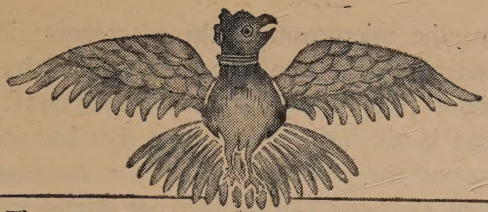
CONTENTS

			Page
Editorials :	—	*Nolini Kanta Gupta*	
(i) Physician, heal Thyself			189
(ii) The Measure of Time			191
(iii) Man the Prototype			192
(iv) The Role of Evil			194
Savitri, Book I Canto IV	—	*Sri Aurobindo*	196
The Master of the Work	—	*Sri Aurobindo*	216
The Future Poetry	—	*Sisir Kumar Ghosh*	225
Freewill in Sri Aurobindo's Vision	—	*K. D. Sethna*	231
Sri Aurobindo	—	*Kishor H. Gandhi*	237
Reviews			
(i) War, Sadism and Peace	—	*A. B.*	241
(ii) India, a Synthesis of Cultures —India Today	—	*C. C. Dutt*	244

Live always as if you were under the very eye of the Supreme and of the Divine Mother. Do nothing, try to think and feel nothing that would be unworthy of the Divine Presence.

Sri Aurobindo

Vol. IV. No. 4 November 1947



The ADVENT

The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS*

PHYSICIAN, HEAL THYSELF

IT is not that humanity does not know or feel the need of a radical change in itself. Everywhere man recognises that if the problems and difficulties that face him have to be solved satisfactorily, there must be a thorough overhauling of his outlook and nature; no mere tinkering with the superficial signs and symptoms of an organic disease by means of palliatives and expediencies and nostrums, but a major operation. Indeed, if he wishes to be cured, he must transcend his present nature and be something else.

And yet he does not change. He has not the sincere will to change. At least he takes the wrong way about it. And the reason is that he does not whole-heartedly adopt the course which he knows to be the only right thing. He is divided in his being: one part knows indeed, but another, the larger, the dynamic part does not profit by that knowledge, ignores it and pursues a contrary path, the accustomed groove of ignorance and *laissez-faire*.

He consoles and comforts himself, lays the flattering unction to his soul by taking to a less exacting ideal, a substitute without tears, as it were. Therefore he looks outside, seeks to reform society, changing its laws and constitution, and wants to believe that in that way society can be remodelled and mankind transformed.

It should have been proved beyond doubt by now that the fact is not so. The only way to cure the world outside is to cure oneself first inside. The ancient proverb still holds good: the macrocosm is only an enlargement

* Based upon talks with the Mother.

of the microcosm, the microcosm is the macrocosm in miniature. The universe is a transcript, a projection on a large scale of the individual nature within. What is there is here and what is not here is not found there. When we see some wrong in the world, something that has got to be set right, instead of rushing out and trying to tackle it in the external field, if one were to hold oneself back and look within, one would surely find, perhaps to his surprise and enlightenment, a very similar movement, often an exact replica in one's own consciousness and character of what one finds in the larger anonymous movements of nature and society. Now it may be admitted that one has no control or almost none over nature; the outside world is beyond our reach and we cannot order or mould it as we like. But the smaller world which is ourselves is not too far or too great for us; our own individual nature and character is ours and we have been given sufficient freedom and power to reform, renew, remake it. That is the secret, although it seems to be a very simple truth, almost a truism.

And if we cannot correct and mould as we wish the little world within which is our own, how can we expect to correct or change the vaster outer world? To leave oneself to be as one is and to try to make others change is evidently an absurd and self-contradictory proposition. On the other hand, if the first thing that one does is to correct oneself, then one will find, much to one's surprise and satisfaction, that there is very little to correct in the world, everything has been already corrected automatically.

Each man is given his little domain within him and he is master of that domain. Nobody is given more (or less even) than what he can successfully manage: the charge is accurately measured according to capacity. One can be indeed a *roi fainéant*, if one chooses to be so; but that is not man's inevitable destiny; he can truly be the ruling king and exercise, to the full, his authority. It is a simple truth that man has a will and can wield it. This will he can consciously develop, increase and enlarge, make it an extremely powerful, if not invincible, instrument for action.

Will is a twofold power: it is energy and it is light. True will, will in essential purity, that is to say, when one is perfectly sincere and determined to follow up one's sincerity, impels rightly and impels infallibly. The consciousness is there of the right thing to do and the energy is also there inherent in that consciousness to work it out inevitably. There is a will belonging to a lower level of the mind which is only a variant of wish, and in reference to that only it is said that even if the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. This will is a light, but without the fire that vivifies: and that is becuase there is a division in the consciousness, "one can love and yet one can betray", (in the words of a famous novelist).

But, as we have already said, man is not condemned to this malady of schizophrenia: he is not by nature a Manichean creature. He is whole and

entire in his inner reality and true consciousness and he can assert his integrality: he has the freedom and the power to do so—he has to and will do so, since it is not merely a possibility but an inevitability that is to come about in the course of his growth and evolution.

And when he has done so, when he has salvaged himself, by that he will have salvaged the world too around him. The measure of the success within will be the measure of the success without.

THE MEASURE OF TIME

When it is said that the Realisation is decreed, is it meant also that the time for it has been fixed? If so, all individual effort and freedom of action seem to go out of the picture, being irrelevant—neither hastening nor retarding the process. The fact is somewhat different, not so simple and trenchant.

There is very little sense in the common notion that everything is predetermined as to the time when it will happen, that the universal scheme has been all inalterably arranged and mapped out from beforehand, that nothing can change it, all goes according to plan. This is only a human conception, a construction of the mind, a wrong translation in the brain of some fact which is otherwise and elsewhere. The mind divides where there is no division, puts things against each other where there is perfect compatibility and harmony. Determinism and Indeterminism, Free-Will and Mechanism are contradictions set up by the mind and have no real objective existence. From a certain view-point, on a certain level of consciousness things appear to move in a rigid frame of mechanistic determinism; from another view-point, on another level, things seem to possess absolute freedom.

Looked at from the higher source of things, the time-factor itself appears as an illusion. What is true is a certain set of conditions in which forces work themselves out. And in this pattern of conditions, time (along with space) does not give the absolute and fixed frame of reference, as is usually taken for granted, but is a varying background, even if it is not a side-issue or a by-product. The conscious force at work in the world aims at change in the conditions: it is a work primarily of rearrangement and order. The state of Nature, of actuality—of ignorance and inertia—is one of chaos. What the Divine Will behind, the Consciousness standing over, does is to develop a cosmos out of that chaos. Things are placed wrongly, at random, pell-mell: they have to be assorted, arranged, docketed, each item in its own place. We know, for example, of the material particle in which the atoms are huddled together, each pointing to a different direction, but

when they are arranged in such a way that one half point in one way and the other half the contrary way, we have what is called a magnetised body.

It is when things are arranged in this manner, the right thing in the right place, that divine perfection, the Realisation in the material, is attained. And for this consummation to come about, the process that is followed is a greater and greater infiltration of higher and higher forces into the field of disorder, of our normal life and consciousness. The time taken simply indicates that the process is being worked out; it is an expression of the rhythm of procedure. But to the Divine, the Supreme Consciousness that works, time itself has no separate meaning or intrinsic value; for it a thousand or a million years do not mean more than what is one moment for us. Indeed, the slowness of time simply marks the steps of events in the lower ranges of creation: as we rise higher and higher, forces from there come down into the lower field, and the tempo of events quickens; finally, when the highest peak is attained and its forces descend and intervene in the ordering of the lowest levels, then the change, the arrangement that is being worked out, is accomplished immediately and without delay: the time lag is abolished altogether. Time may be compared to a kind of elastic bond connecting the highest and the lowest and running through the intermediate zones. It contracts as one moves upward and is telescoped, as it were, at the top.

MAN THE PROTOTYPE

The earth has been created for a special purpose; it has a divine role to fulfil. And so there is only one earth and not many, in spite of what the scientists may say. The earth is not a mass of dead matter, not merely the dwelling-place of the growths that have occurred upon it, of plants and animals and men. She is the home and she is the mother of them all. She has a consciousness and a personality, the outer form that we see is only her body.

Indeed, all the luminaries of heaven have each its conscious personality, the planets, the moon and above all the great sun. It is not fancy or idle imagination that made the astrologers ascribe definite influences to these heavenly bodies. In Hindu astrology, for example, they are considered as real persons, each with a definite form and character, a *dhyana rupa*. The so-called Nature-gods in the Vedas or in ancient mythology generally are in the same way not creations of mere poetic imagination: they are realities, more real in a sense than the real objects that represent and incarnate them.

Not only so. Our limited mind and senses are accustomed to view and recognise individuals alone as persons. But there are group personalities too. Thus each species has a generic personality, a consciousness and an ideal or

intrinsic form also: the individuals on the physical plane are its various incarnations, projections and formations. Old Plato was not so naïve, as we of today are apt to believe, when he spoke of the real reality of general ideas. The attributes, qualities and functions of the generic personality are the source and pattern of what the individuals that form the group actually are. The group person is the king, he is also the body of the Dharma ruling the domain. Any change in the law of being of the group person is necessarily translated in a similar change in the nature and activity of the individuals of the species. What evolutionists describe as sudden variation or mutation and whose cause or genesis they are at a loss to trace, is precisely due to an occult change in the consciousness and will of the group soul.

Man too as a species has a generic personality, his prototype. Only, in opposition to the scientific view, that is an earlier phenomenon belonging to the very origin of things. Man in his essential form and reality is found at the source and beginning of creation. When the unmanifest Transcendent stoops to manifest, when there is the first expression of typal variations in the infinite as the basis of physical creation, then and there appears Man in his essential and eternal divine form. He is there almost as a sentinel, guarding the passage from the formless to form. Indeed, he is the first original form of the formless. A certain poet says that man is the archetype of all living forms. A bird is a flying man, a fish a swimming man, a worm a crawling man, even a plant is but a rooted man. His form belongs to a region beyond even the first principles of creation. The first principles that bring out and shape and uphold the manifested universe are the trinity: Life, Light and Delight—in other terms, Sachchidananda. The whole complex of the manifest universe is resolvable into that unity of triple status. But behind even this supernal, further on towards the final disappearance into the absolute Unmanifest—summing up, as it were, in him the whole manifestation—stands this original primordial form, this first person, this archetypal Man.

The essential appearance of Man is, as we have said, the prototype of the actual man. That is to say, the actual man is a projection, even though a somewhat disfigured projection, of the original form; yet there is an essential similarity of pattern, a commensurability between the two. The winged angels, the cherubs and seraphs are reputed to be ideal figures of beauty, but they are nothing akin to the Prototype, they belong to a different line of emanation, other than that of the human being. We may have some idea of what it is like by taking recourse to the distinction that Greek philosophers used to make between the formal and the material cause of things. The prototype is the formal reality hidden and imbedded in the material reality of an object. The essential form is made of the original configuration of primary vibrations that later on consolidate and become a compact mass, arriving finally at its dense physico-chemical composition. A subtle yet

perfect harmony of vibrations forming a living whole is what the prototype essentially is. An artist perhaps is in a better position to understand what we have been labouring to describe. The artist's eye is not confined to the gross physical form of an object, even the most realistic artist does not hold up the mirror to Nature in that sense: he goes behind and sees the inner contour, the subtle figuration that underlies the external volume and mass. It is that that is beautiful and harmonious and significant, and it is that which the artist endeavours to bring out and fix in a system or body of lines and colours. That inner form is not the outer visible form and still it is that form fundamentally, essentially. It is that and it is not that. We may add another analogy to illustrate the point. Pythagoras, for example, spoke of numbers being realities, the real realities of all sensible objects. He was evidently referring to the basic truth in each individual and this truth appeared to him as a number, the substance and relation that remain of an object when everything concrete and superficial is extracted—or abstracted —out of it. A number to him is a quality, a vibration, a quantum of wave-particles, in the modern scientific terminology, a norm. The human prototype can be conceived as something of the category of the Pythagorean number.

The conception of the Purusha at the origin of things, as the very source of things, so familiar to the Indian tradition, gives this high primacy to the human figure. We know also of the cosmic godhead cast in man's mould—although with multiple heads and feet—visioned and hymned by sages and seers. The gods themselves seem to possess a human frame. The Upanishads say that once upon a time the gods looked about for a proper body to dwell in, they were disappointed with all others; it is only when the human form was presented that they exclaimed, "This is indeed a perfect form, a perfect form indeed." All that indicates the feeling and perception that there is something eternal and transcendent in the human body-frame.

THE ROLE OF EVIL

The advent or the presence of evil upon earth has introduced certain factors in human life that have enriched it, increased even its value. Certain experiences would not have been there, intimate and revelatory experiences, but for this Dark Shadow. One can, of course, conceive a line of growth and development in which it is all light and delight, everything is good and for the good. But then a whole domain of experience and realisation would have been missed. There are certain experiences that one would not like not to have had at all, even though that may mean paying and paying heavily.

Evil is evil, no doubt; it is not divine and it is not an illusion. It is a real blot on the fair face of creation. Its existence cannot be justified in the sense that it is the right thing and has to be welcomed and maintained, since it forms part of the universal symphony. Not even in the sense that it is a test and a trial set by the Divine for the righteous to prove their merit. It has not been put there with a set purpose, but that once given, it has been the occasion of a miracle, it offered the opportunity for the manifestation of something unique, great and grandiose, marvellous and beautiful. The presence of evil moved the Divine—*Justizia mosse il mio alto Fattore*—and Grace was born. He descended, the Aloof and the Transcendent, in all his love and compassion down into this vale of tears: he descended straight into our midst without halting anywhere in the infinite gradation that marks the distance between the highest and the lowest, he descended from the very highest into the very lowest, demanding nothing, asking for no condition whatsoever from the soul in Ignorance, from the earth under the grip of evil. Thus it was that Life lodged itself in the home of death, Light found its way into the far cavern of obscurity and inconscience, and Delight bloomed in the core of misery. Hope was lit, a flame rising from the nether gloom towards the Dawn. But for the spirit of denial we would not have seen this close and intimate figure of the gracious Mother.

This is the divine miracle that has been vouchsafed to man, the spectacle of the Divine himself becoming an earthly creature, wearing as his own body of flesh and blood this mortal frame of pain and suffering and ignorance, of obscurity and incapacity and falsehood. This is the calvary he has accepted, the sacrifice of his divinity he agreed to in order that this undivine too may gracefully serve the Divine, be taken up and transmuted into the reality from which it fell, of which it is an aberration.

The glory and beauty of this gesture one would not like not to have witnessed and experienced and shared.

SAVITRI

BOOK ONE CANTO FOUR*

THE SECRET KNOWLEDGE

ON a height he stood that looked towards greater heights.
Our early approaches to the Infinite
Are sunrise splendours on a marvellous verge
While lingers yet unseen the glorious sun.
What now we see is a shadow of what must come.
The earth's uplook to a remote unknown
Is a preface only of the epic climb
Of human soul to an eternal state.
This world is a beginning and a base
Where Life and Mind erect their structured dreams;
An unborn Power must build reality.
A deathbound littleness is not all we are:
Immortal our forgotten vastnesses
Await discovery in our summit selves;
Unmeasured breadths and depths of being are ours.
Akin to the ineffable secrecy,
Mystic, eternal in unrealised Time,
Neighbours of Heaven are Nature's altitudes.
To these high-raised dominions of the Self
Too far from surface Nature's postal routes,
Too lofty for our mortal lives to breathe,
Deep in us are responding elements.
Even when we fail to look into our souls
And lie embedded in earthly consciousness,
Still are there parts that grow towards the Light,
Yet are there luminous tracts and heavens serene
And Eldoradoes of splendour and ecstasy
And temples to the Godhead none can see.
And sometimes, when our sight is turned within,

* Cantos 1-3 were published in Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual, Calcutta, 1946 and 1947.

Earth's ignorant veil is lifted from our eyes;
There is a short miraculous escape.
This fringe of clamped experience left behind,
Our souls can visit in great lonely hours
Still regions of imperishable Light,
All-seeing eagle-peaks of silent Power
And moon-flame oceans of swift fathomless Bliss
And calm immensities of spirit Space.
In the unfolding process of the Self
Sometimes the inexpressible Mystery
Elects a human vessel of descent.
A breath comes down from a supernal air,
A presence is borne, a guiding Light awakes,
A stillness falls upon the instruments:
Fixed sometimes like a marble monument,
Stone-calm, the body is a pedestal
Supporting a figure of eternal Peace.
Or a revealing Force sweeps blazing in;
Out of some vast superior continent
Knowledge breaks through trailing its radiant seas,
And Nature trembles with the power, the flame.
A greater Personality sometimes
Possesses us which yet we know is ours:
Or we adore the Master of our souls.
Then the small bodily ego thins and falls;
No more insisting on its separate self,
Losing the punctilio of its separate birth,
It leaves us one with Nature and with God.
In moments when the inner lamps are lit
And the life's cherished guests are left outside,
Our spirit sits alone and speaks to its gulfs.
A wider consciousness opens then its doors;
Invading from spiritual silences
A ray of the timeless Glory stoops awhile
To commune with our seized illumined clay
And leaves its huge white stamp upon our lives.
In the oblivious field of mortal mind,
Revealed to the closed prophet eyes of trance
Or in some deep internal solitude
Witnessed by a strange immaterial sense,
The signals of eternity appear.
The truth mind could not know unveils its face,

We hear what mortal ears have never heard,
We feel what earthly sense has never felt,
We love what common hearts repel and dread;
Our minds hush to a bright Omniscient;
A Voice calls from the chambers of the Soul;
We meet the ecstasy of the Godhead's touch
In golden privacies of immortal fire.
These signs are native to a larger self
That lives within us by ourselves unseen;
Only sometimes a holier influence comes,
A tide of mightier surgings bears our lives
And a diviner Presence moves the soul.
Or through the earthly coverings something breaks,
A grace and beauty of spiritual light,
The murmuring tongue of a celestial fire.
Ourself and a high stranger whom we feel,
It is and acts unseen as if it were not;
It follows the line of sempiternal birth,
Yet seems to perish with its mortal frame.
Assured of the Apocalypse to be,
It reckons not the moments and the hours;
Great, patient, calm it sees the centuries pass,
Awaiting the slow miracle of our change
In the sure deliberate process of world force
And the long march of all-revealing Time.
It is the origin and the master-clue,
A Silence overhead, an inner Voice,
A living image seated in the heart,
An unwalled wideness and a fathomless point,
The truth of all these cryptic shows in space,
The Real towards which our strivings move,
The secret grandiose meaning of our lives.
A treasure of honey in the combs of God,
A Splendour burning in a tenebrous cloak,
It is our glory of the flame of God,
Our golden fountain of the world's delight,
An immortality cowled in the cape of death,
The shape of our unborn divinity.
It guards for us our fate in depths within
Where sleeps the eternal seed of transient things.
Always we bear in us a magic key
Concealed in life's hermetic envelope.

A burning witness in the sanctuary
Regards through Time and the blind walls of Form;
A timeless Light is in his hidden eyes;
He sees the secret things no words can speak
And knows the goal of the unconscious world
And the heart of the mystery of the journeying years.

But all is screened, subliminal, mystical;
It needs the intuitive heart, the inward turn,
It needs the power of a spiritual gaze.
Else to our waking mind's small moment look
A goalless voyage seems our dubious course
Some Chance has settled or hazarded some will,
Or a Necessity without aim or cause
Unwillingly compelled to emerge and be.
In this dense field where nothing is plain or sure,
Our very being seems to us questionable,
Our life a vague experiment, the soul
A flickering light in a strange ignorant world,
The earth a brute mechanic accident,
A net of death in which by chance we live.
All we have learned appears a doubtful guess,
The achievement done a passage or a phase
Whose further end is hidden from our sight,
A chance happening or a fortuitous fate.
Out of the unknown we move to the unknown.
Ever surround our brief existence here
Grey shadows of unanswered questionings;
The dark Inconscient's signless mysteries
Stand up unsolved behind Fate's starting line;
An aspiration in the Night's profound,
Seed of a perishing body and half-lit mind,
Uplifts its lonely tongue of conscious fire
Towards an undying Light for ever lost.
Only it hears, sole echo of its call,
The dim reply in man's unknowing heart
And meets, not understanding why it came
Or for what reason is the suffering here,
God's sanction to the paradox of life
And the riddle of the Immortal's birth in Time.
Along a path of aeons serpentine
In the coiled blackness of her nescient course

The Earth-Goddess toils across the sands of Time.
A Being is in her whom she hopes to know,
A Word speaks to her heart she cannot hear,
A Fate compels whose form she cannot see.
In her unconscious orbit through the Void
Out of her mindless depths she strives to rise,
A perilous life her gain, a struggling joy;
A Thought that can conceive but hardly knows
Arises slowly in her and creates
The idea, the speech that labels more than it lights;
A trembling gladness that is less than bliss
Invades from all this beauty that must die.
Alarmed by the sorrow dragging at her feet
And conscious of the high things not yet won,
Ever she nurses in her sleepless breast
An inward urge that takes from her rest and peace.
Ignorant and weary and invincible
She seeks through the soul's war and quivering pain
The pure perfection her marred nature needs,
A breath of Godhead on her stone and mire.
A faith she craves that can survive defeat,
The sureness of a love that knows not death,
The radiance of a truth for ever sure.
A light grows in her, she assumes a voice,
Her state she learns to read and the act she has done,
But the one needed truth eludes her grasp,
Herself and all of which she is the sign.
An inarticulate whisper drives her steps
Of which she feels the force but not the sense;
A few rare intimations come as guides,
Immense divining flashes cleave her brain,
And sometimes in her hours of dream and muse
The truth that she has missed looks out on her
As if far off and yet within her soul.
A change comes near that flees from her surmise
And, ever postponed, compels attempt and hope,
Yet seems too great for mortal hope to dare.
A vision meets her of supernal Powers
That draw her as if mighty kinsmen lost
Approaching with estranged great luminous gaze.
Then is she moved to all that she is not
And stretches arms to what was never hers.

Outstretching arms to the unconscious Void,
Passionate she prays to invisible forms of Gods
Soliciting from dumb Fate and toiling Time
What most she needs, what most exceeds her scope,
A Mind unvisited by illusion's gleams,
A Will expressive of soul's deity,
A strength not forced to stumble by its speed,
A Joy that drags not sorrow as its shade.
For these she yearns and feels them destined hers:
Heaven's privilege she claims as her own right.
Just is her claim the all-witnessing Gods approve,
Clear in a greater light than reason owns:
Our intuitions are its title-deeds;
Our souls accept what our blind thoughts refuse.
Earth's winged chimeras are Truth's steeds in Heaven,
The impossible God's sign of things to be.
But few can look beyond the present state
Or overleap this matted hedge of sense.
All that transpires on earth and all beyond
Are parts of an illimitable plan
The One keeps in his heart and knows alone.
Our outward happenings have their seed within,
And even this random Fate that imitates Chance,
This mass of unintelligible results,
Are the dumb graph of truths that work unseen:
The laws of the Unknown create the known.
The events that shape the appearance of our lives
Are a cipher of subliminal quiverings
Which rarely we surprise or vaguely feel,
Are an outcome of suppressed realities
That hardly rise into material day:
They are born from the spirit's sun of hidden powers
Digging a tunnel through emergency.
But who shall pierce into the cryptic gulf
And learn what deep necessity of the soul
Determined casual deed and consequence?
Absorbed in a routine of daily acts,
Our eyes are fixed on an external scene;
We hear the crash of the wheels of Circumstance
And wonder at the hidden cause of things.
Yet a foreseeing Knowledge might be ours,
If we could take our spirit's stand within,

If we could hear the muffled daemon voice.
Too seldom is the shadow of what must come
Cast in an instant on the secret sense
Which feels the shock of the invisible,
And seldom in the few who answer give
The mighty process of the cosmic Will
Communicates its image to our sight,
Identifying the world's mind with ours.
Our range is fixed within the crowded arc
Of what we observe and touch and thought can guess
And rarely dawns the light of the Unknown
Waking in us the prophet and the seer.
The outward and the immediate are our field,
The dead past is our background and support;
Mind keeps the soul prisoner, we are slaves to our acts;
We cannot free our gaze to reach wisdom's sun.
Inheritor of the brief animal mind,
Man, still a child in Nature's mighty hands,
In the succession of the moments lives;
To a changing present is his narrow right;
His memory stares back at a phantom past,
The future flees before him as he moves;
He sees imagined garments, not a face.
Armed with a limited precarious strength,
He saves his fruits of work from adverse chance.
A struggling ignorance is his wisdom's mate.
He waits to see the consequence of his acts,
He waits to weigh the certitude of his thoughts,
He knows not what he shall achieve or when;
He knows not whether at last he shall survive,
Or end like the mastodon and the sloth
And perish from the earth where he was king.
He is ignorant of the meaning of his life,
He is ignorant of his high and splendid fate.
Only the Immortals on their deathless heights
Dwelling beyond the walls of Time and Space,
Masters of living, free from the bonds of Thought,
Who are overseers of Fate and Chance and Will
And experts of the theorem of world-need,
Can see the Idea, the Might that change Time's course,
Come maned with light from undiscovered worlds,
Hear, while the world toils on with its deep blind heart,

The galloping hooves of the unforeseen event,
Bearing the superhuman rider, near
And, impassive to earth's din and startled cry,
Return to the silence of the hills of God;
As lightning leaps, as thunder sweeps, they pass
And leave their mark on the trampled breast of Life.
Above the world the world-creators stand,
In the phenomenon see its mystic source.
These heed not the deceiving outward play,
They turn not to the moment's busy tramp,
But listen with the still patience of the Unborn
For the slow footsteps of far Destiny
Approaching through huge distances of Time,
Unmarked by the eye that sees effect and cause,
Unheard mid the clamour of the human plane.
Attentive to an unseen Truth they seize
A sound as of invisible augur wings,
Voices of an unplumbed significance,
Mutterings in the brooding core of Matter's sleep.
In the heart's profound audition they can catch
The murmurs lost by life's uncaring ear,
A prophet-speech in thought's omniscient trance.
Above the illusion of the hopes that pass,
Behind the appearance and the overt act,
Behind the clock-work chance and vague surmise,
Amid the wrestle of force, the trampling feet,
Across the triumph, fighting and despair,
They see the Bliss for which earth's heart has cried,
On the long road which cannot see its end
Wind undetected through the sceptic days
And to meet it guide the unheedful moving world.
Thus will the masked Transcendent mount his throne.
When darkness deepens strangling the earth's breast
And man's corporeal mind is the only lamp,
As a thief's in the night shall be the covert tread
Of one who steps unseen into his house.
A Voice ill-heard shall speak, the soul obey,
A power into mind's inner chamber steal,
A charm and sweetness open life's closed doors
And beauty conquer the resisting world,
The truth-light capture Nature by surprise,
A stealth of God compel the heart to bliss

And earth grow unexpectedly divine.
In Matter shall be lit the spirit's glow,
In body and body kindle the sacred birth;
Night shall awake to the anthem of the stars,
The days become a happy pilgrim march,
Our will a force of the Eternal's power,
And thought the rays of a spiritual sun.
A few shall see what none yet understand;
God shall grow up while the wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till its hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done.

A consciousness that seeks for its own truth
Between the being's dark and luminous ends
Moves here in a half-light that seems the whole.
An interregnum in Reality
Cuts off the integral Thought, the total Power;
It circles or stands in a vague interspace,
Doubtful of its beginning and its close,
Or runs upon a road that has no end;
Far from the original Dusk, the final Flame
In some huge void Inconscience it lives,
Like a thought persisting in a wide emptiness.
As if an unintelligible phrase
Suggested a million renderings to the Mind,
It lends a purport to the random world.
A conjecture leaning upon doubtful proofs
Or a message confused is all that it can speak,
Or a portion of the universal word.
It leaves two giant letters void of sense
While without sanction turns the middle sign
Carrying an enigmatic universe,
As if a present without future or past
Repeating the same revolution's whirl
Turned on its axis in its own Inane.
Thus is the meaning of creation veiled;
For without context reads the cosmic page:
Its signs stare at us like an unknown script,
Like a foreign tongue in its parable sublime.
It wears to the perishable creature's eyes
The grandeur of a useless miracle;
Wasting itself that it may last for a while

Like a fire in the Night is its mighty action's blaze.
This is our deepest need to join once more
What now is parted, opposite and twain,
Remote in sovereign spheres that never meet
Or fronting like far poles of Night and Day.
We must fill the immense lacuna we have made,
Re-wed the closed finite's lonely consonant
With the open vowels of Infinity,
Their hyphen isthmus the ascending soul,
Recall to Mind the lost divine Idea,
Reconstitute the perfect word, unite
The Alpha and the Omega in one sound;
Then shall the spirit and Nature be at one.
Two are the ends of the mysterious plan.
In the wide signless ether of the Self,
In the unchanging Silence white and nude,
Aloof, resplendent like gold dazzling suns
Veiled by the Ray no mortal eye can bear,
The Spirit's free and absolute potencies
Burn in the solitude of the thoughts of God.
A rapture and a radiance and a hush
Delivered from the approach of wounded hearts,
Denied to the Idea that looks at grief,
Remote from the Force that cries out in its pain,
In his inalienable bliss they live.
Immaculate in self-knowledge and self-power,
Calm they repose on the eternal Will.
Only his law they count and him obey;
They have no goal to reach, no aim to serve.
Implacable in their timeless purity,
All barter or bribe of worship they refuse;
Unmoved by cry of revolt and ignorant prayer
They reckon not our virtue and our sin,
They bend not to the voices that implore,
They hold no traffic with error and its reign:
They are guardians of the silence of the Truth,
They are keepers of the immutable decree.
A deep surrender is their source of might,
A still identity their way to know,
Motionless is their action like a sleep.
At peace, regarding the trouble beneath the stars,
Deathless, watching the works of Death and Chance,

Immobile, seeing the millenniums pass
Untouched while the long map of Fate unrolls,
They look on our struggle with impartial eyes,
And yet without them cosmos could not be.
Impervious to desire and doom and hope,
Their station of inviolable might
Moveless upholds the world's enormous task,
Its ignorance is by their knowledge lit,
Its yearning lasts by their indifference.
As the height draws the low ever to climb,
As the breadths draw the small to adventure vast,
Their aloofness drives man to surpass himself.
Our passion heaves to wed the eternal calm,
Our dwarf-search mind to meet the Omniscient's force.
Acquiescing in the wisdom that made hell
And the harsh utility of death and tears,
Acquiescing in the gradual steps of Time,
Careless they seem of the grief that stings the world's heart,
Careless of the pain that rends its body and life;
Above joy and sorrow is that grandeur's walk:
They have no portion in the good that dies,
Mute, pure, they share not in the evil done;
Else might their strength be marred and could not save.
Alive to the truth that dwells in God's extremes,
Awake to a motion of all-seeing Force,
The slow venture of the long ambiguous years
And the unexpected good from woeful deeds,
The immortal sees not as we vainly see.
He looks on hidden aspects and screened powers,
He knows the law and natural line of things.
Undriven by a brief life's will to act,
Unharassed by the spur of pity and fear,
He makes no haste to untie the cosmic knot
Or the world's torn jarring heart to reconcile.
In Time he waits for the Eternal's hour.
Yet a spiritual secret aid is there;
While a tardy Evolution's coils wind on
And Nature hews her way through adamant
A divine intervention thrones above.
Alive in a dead rotating universe
We whirl not here upon a casual globe
Abandoned to a task beyond our force:

Even through the tangled anarchy called Fate
And through the bitterness of death and fall
An outstretched Hand is felt upon our lives.
It is near us in unnumbered bodies and births;
In its unshaken grasp it keeps for us safe
The one inevitable supreme result
No will can take away and no doom change,
The crown of conscious Immortality,
The godhead promised to our struggling souls
When first man's heart dared death and suffered life.
One who has shaped this world is ever its lord:
Our errors are his steps upon the way;
He works through the fierce vicissitudes of our lives,
He works through the hard breath of battle and toil,
He works through our sins and sorrows and our tears,
His knowledge overrules our nescience;
Whatever the appearance we must bear,
Whatever our strong ills and present fate,
When nothing we can see but drift and bale,
A mighty Guidance leads us still through all.
After we have served this great divided world
God's bliss and oneness are our inborn right.
A date is fixed in the calendar of the Unknown,
An anniversary of the Birth sublime:
Our soul shall justify this chequered walk,
All will come near that now is nought or far.
These calm and distant Mights shall act at last.
Immovably ready for their destined task,
The ever-wise compassionate Brilliances
Await the sound of the Incarnate's voice
To leap and bridge the chasms of Ignorance
And heal the hollow yearning gulfs of Life
And fill the abyss that is the universe.
Here meanwhile at the Spirit's opposite pole
In the mystery of the deeps that God has built
For his abode below the Thinker's sight,
In this compromise of a stark absolute Truth
With the Light that dwells near the dark end of things,
In this tragi-comedy of divine disguise,
This long far seeking for joy ever near,
In the grandiose dream of which the world is made,
In this gold dome on a black dragon base,

The conscious Force that acts in Nature's breast,
A dark-robed labourer in the cosmic scheme
Carrying clay images of unborn gods,
Executrix of the inevitable Idea
Hampered, enveloped by the hoops of Fate,
Patient trustee of slow eternal Time,
Absolves from hour to hour her secret charge.
All she foresees in masked imperative depths;
The dumb intention of the unconscious gulfs
Answers to a will that sees upon the heights,
And the evolving Word's first syllable
Ponderous, brute-sensed, contains its luminous close,
Privy to a summit victory's vast descent
And the portent of the soul's immense uprise.

All here where each thing seems its lonely self
Are figures of the sole transcendent One:
Only by him they are, his breath is their life;
An unseen Presence moulds the oblivious clay.
A playmate in the mighty Mother's game,
One came upon the dubious whirling globe
To hide from her pursuit in force and form.
A secret spirit in the Inconscient's sleep,
A shapeless Energy, a voiceless Word,
He was here before the elements could emerge,
Before there was light of mind or life could breathe.
Accomplice of her cosmic huge pretence,
His semblances he turns to real shapes
And makes the symbol equal with the truth:
He gives to his timeless thoughts a form in Time.
He is the substance, he the self of things;
She has forged from him her works of skill and might:
She wraps him in the magic of her moods
And makes of his myriad truths her countless dreams.
The Master of being has come close to her,
An immortal child born in the fugitive years.
In objects wrought, in the persons she conceives,
Dreaming she chases her idea of him,
And catches here a look and there a gest:
Ever he repeats in them his ceaseless births.
He is the Maker and the world he made,
He is the vision and he is the Seer;

He is himself the actor and the act,
He is himself the knower and the known,
He is himself the dreamer and the dream.
There are Two who are One and play in many worlds;
In Knowledge and Ignorance they have spoken and met
And light and darkness are their eyes' interchange.
Our pleasure and pain are their wrestle and embrace,
Our deeds, our hopes are intimate to their tale;
They are married secretly in our thought and life.
The universe is an endless masquerade:
For nothing here is utterly what it seems,
It is a dream-fact vision of a truth
Which without the dream would not be wholly true.
A significant phenomenon stands out;
We accept its face and pass by all it means;
A part is seen, we take it for the whole.
Thus have they planned their play with us for roles;
Author and actor with himself as scene,
He moves there as the Soul, as Nature she.
Here on the earth where we must fill our parts,
She has concealed her glory and her bliss
And disguised the Love and Wisdom in her heart.
Of all the marvel and beauty that are hers
Only a darkened little we can feel.
He too wears a diminished Godhead here,
He has forsaken his omnipotence,
His calm he has foregone and infinity.
He knows her only, he has forgotten himself;
To her he abandons all to make her great.
He hopes in her to find himself anew,
Incarnate, wedding his infinity's peace
To her creative passion's ecstasy.
Although possessor of the earth and heavens,
He leaves to her the cosmic management.
An eager solicitor for her love and grace,
A courtier in her numberless retinue,
Content to be with her or to feel her near,
He makes the most of the little that she yields,
Her slightest signs of favour proudly wears.
Happy, inert he lies beneath her feet:
His breast he offers for her cosmic dance
Of which our lives are the quivering theatre,

And which none could bear but for his strength within,
But none would leave because of his delight.
Passive, he bears the impacts of the world,
Active, he does whatever her will inspires;
A witness and student of her joy and dole,
A partner in her evil and her good,
He has consented to her passionate ways,
He is driven by her sweet and dreadful force.
His sanctioning name initials all her works;
His witness silence justifies her deeds;
In her fancies of the moment and its mood,
In the execution of her drama's scheme,
In our lives she enacts through him things great and small,
Things terrible and beautiful and divine.
Her empire in the cosmos she has built
And he is governed by her mighty laws.
His being a field of her vast experiment,
His consciousness a babe upon her knees,
She binds to knowledge of the shapes of Time
And the creative error of limiting mind
And chance that wears the rigid face of fate
And her sport of death and pain and Nescience
His suppressed and struggling immortality.
His soul is a subtle atom in a mass,
His substance a material for her work.
His spirit survives amid the death of things,
He is carried by her from the Night to Light.
This grand surrender is his free-will gift,
His pure transcendent force submits to her.
In the pattern she has set for him he moves,
He thinks with her thoughts, with her trouble his bosom heaves;
He seems the thing that she would have him seem
Or is whatever her artist will can make.
To reign she spurs him, her powers he must control:
He studies her ways, if so he may prevail,
He has harnessed her to the yoke of her own law;
His face of human thought puts on a crown:
To obey, she feigns to live only for his use,
But when he conquers her then is he most her slave;
He is her dependent and she rules him still.
Only when he has remembered his true self,
Her highest heights she unmasks and is his mate.

Till then he is a plaything of her moods,
A seeming regent, yet her willing toy:
Obedient to her masterful control,
Her subject waiting on her sovereign eyes,
He has sold himself into her regal power
For any blow or boon that she may choose.
Even in what is suffering to our sense,
He bears the sweetness of her mastering touch,
In all experience feels her blissful hands;
All that she does is marvellous in his sight;
He rejoices in her every thought and act
And gives consent to all that she can wish;
Whatever she desires he wills to be.
All-knowing he accepts our darkened state,
Divine, wears shapes of animal or man;
Eternal, he assents to Fate and Time,
Immortal, dallies with mortality.
The All-Conscious ventured into Ignorance,
The All-Blissful bore to be insensible.
Incarnate in a world of strife and pain,
He puts on joy and sorrow like a robe
And drinks experience like a strengthening wine.
He whose transcendence rules the pregnant Vasts,
Prescient now dwells in our subliminal depths,
A luminous individual Power, alone.

The Absolute, the Perfect, the Alone
Has called out of his silence his mute Force
Where she lay in the featureless and formless hush
Guarding from Time by her immobile sleep
The ineffable puissance of his solitude.
The Absolute, the Perfect, the Alone
Has entered with his silence into space:
He has fashioned countless persons from his self;
He lives in all, who lived in himself alone;
Space is himself and Time is only he.
The Absolute, the Perfect, the Immune,
One who is in us as our secret self,
Our mask of imperfection has assumed
And made this tenement of flesh his own,
His image in the human measure cast
That to his divine measure we might rise;

Ourselves recasting he can then impose
A plan of godhead on the mortal's mould.
A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme:
We must put on his nature as he put ours;
We are sons of God and must be even as he:
His human portion, we must grow divine.
Our life is a paradox with God for key.
But meanwhile all is a shadow cast by a dream
And to the musing and immobile Spirit
Life and himself don the aspect of a myth,
The burden of a long unmeaning tale.
For the key is hid and by the Inconscient kept;
The secret God beneath the threshold dwells.
In a body obscuring the immortal Spirit
A nameless Resident with unknown powers,
An omnipotent indiscernible Influence,
He sits, unfelt by the form in which he lives
And veils his knowledge by the groping mind.
A wanderer in a world his thoughts have made,
He turns in a chiaroscuro of error and truth
To find a wisdom that on high is his.
As one forgetting he searches for himself;
As if he had lost an inner light he seeks:
As a sojourner lingering amid alien scenes
He journeys to a home he knows no more.
His own self's truth he seeks who is the Truth;
He is the Player who became the play,
He is the Thinker who became the thought;
He is the many who was the silent One.
In the symbol figures of the cosmic Force
And in her living and inanimate signs
And in her complex tracery of events
He explores the ceaseless miracle of himself,
Till the thousandfold enigma has been solved
In the single light of an all-witnessing Soul.

This was his compact with his mighty mate,
For love of her, for ever joined with her
To follow the course of Time's eternity,
Amid magic dramas of her sudden moods
And the surprises of her masked Idea
And the vicissitudes of her vast caprice.
His goals are two and apart, which yet are one:

Of the great Mother's wide uncharted will
And the rude enigma of her terrestrial ways
He is the explorer and the mariner;
On a secret inner ocean without bourne
He is the adventurer and cosmologist
Of a magic earth's obscure geography.
In her material order's clear design,
Even though the end is left for ever unsure,
Though ever unstable is life's shifting flow,
His paths are found for him; firm lands appear
As stations in the ages' weltering flood,
Then new horizons lure the mind's advance.
There comes no close to the finite's boundlessness,
There is no last certitude in which thought can pause
And no terminus of the soul's experience.
A farthest limit never wholly reached,
An unattained perfection calls to him
From distant boundaries in the unknown:
A long beginning only has been made.
An expert captain of a fragile craft,
At first he hugs the shore and shuns the main,
And in a petty coastal traffic plies,
His pay doled out from port to neighbouring port,
Content with a safe round ever the same.
Then his world widens and wider grow his powers.
On a commissioned keel his merchant hull
Serving her commerce in the riches of Time
Severs the foam of a great land-locked sea
To reach unknown harbour lights in distant climes
Or open markets of her opulent trade
In jewelled toys brought for an infant's play
And perishable products of hard toil
And transient splendours won and lost by the days.
Or passing through a gate of pillar-rocks
He finds new havens in storm-troubled isles,
Or, guided by a sure compass in his thought,
He plunges through a bright haze that hides the stars,
Steering on the trade routes of Ignorance.
He chances on unimagined continents,
Long coral reefs meets in an ocean waste.
At last he hears a chanting on the heights
And the far speaks and the unknown grows near:

He crosses borders into unseen realms
And a new vision of himself and things.
He is a spirit in an unfinished world
That knows him not and cannot know itself:
The surface symbol of his goalless quest
Takes deeper meanings to his inner view;
His is a search of darkness for the light,
Of mortal life for immortality.
In the vessel of an earthly embodiment
Over the narrow rails of limiting sense
He looks out on the magic waves of Time
Where mind like a moon illumines the world's dark.
There is limned ever retreating from the eyes,
As if in a tenuous misty dream-light drawn,
The outline of a dim mysterious shore.
A sailor on the Inconscient's fathomless sea,
He voyages through a starry world of thought
On Matter's deck to a spiritual sun.
Across the noise and multitudinous cry,
Across the rapt unknowable silences
Through a strange mid-world under supernal skies,
Beyond earth's longitudes and latitudes,
His goal is fixed outside all present maps.
But none learns whither through the unknown he sails
Or what secret mission the great Mother gave.
In the hidden strength of her omnipotent Will
Driven by her breath across life's tossing deep,
Through the thunder's roar and through the windless hush,
Through fog and mist where nothing more is seen,
He carries her sealed orders in his breast.
Late will he know, opening the mystic script,
Whether to a blank port of the Infinite
He goes, or armed with her fiat, to discover
His new mind and body in the city of God
And enshrine the Immortal in his glory's house
And make the finite one with Infinity.
Across the salt waste of the endless years
Her ocean winds impel his errant boat,
The cosmic waters plashing as he goes,
A rumour around him and danger and a call.
Always he follows in her force's wake.
He sails through life and death and other life,

He travels on through waking and through sleep.
A power is on him from her occult force
That ties him to his own creation's fate,
And never can the mighty traveller rest
And never can the mystic voyage cease,
Till the nescient dusk is lifted from man's soul
And the morns of God have overtaken his night.
As long as Nature lasts, he too is there;
For this is sure that he and she are one.
Even when he sleeps, he keeps her on his breast:
Whoever leaves her, he will not depart
To repose without her in the Unknowable.
There is a truth to know, a work to do;
Her play is real; a Mystery he fulfils:
There is a plan in the Mother's deep world-whim,
A purpose in her vast and random game.
This ever she meant since the first dawn of life,
This constant will she covered with her sport,
To evoke a person in the impersonal Void,
With the Truth-Light strike earth's massive roots of trance,
Wake a dumb self in the inconscient depths
And raise a lost power from its python sleep
That the eyes of the Timeless might look out from Time
And the world manifest the unveiled Divine.
For this he left his white infinity
And laid on the Spirit the burden of the flesh,
That Godhead's seed might flower in mindless Space.

END OF CANTO FOUR

THE MASTER OF THE WORK*

THE Master and Mover of our works is the One, the Universal and Supreme, the Eternal and the Infinite. He is the transcendent unknown or unknowable Absolute, the unexpressed and unmanifested Ineffable above us; but He is also the Self of all beings, the Master of all worlds, transcending all worlds, the Light and the Guide, the All-Beautiful and All-Blissful, the Beloved and the Lover. He is the Cosmic Spirit and all this creative Energy around us; He is the Immanent within us. All that is is He, and He is the More than all that is, and we ourselves, though we know it not, are being of His being, force of His force, conscious with a consciousness derived from His; even our mortal existence is made out of His substance and there is an immortal within us that is a spark of the Light and Bliss that are for ever. No matter whether by knowledge, works, love or any other means, to become aware of this truth of our being, to realise it, to make it effective here or elsewhere is the object of all Yoga.

★ ★ ★

But the passage is long and the labour arduous before we can look upon Him with eyes that see true, and still longer and more arduous must be our endeavour if we would rebuild ourselves in His true image. The Master of the work does not reveal Himself at once to the seeker. Always it is his Power that acts behind the veil, but it is manifest only when we renounce the egoism of the worker, and its direct movement increases in proportion as that renunciation becomes more and more concrete. Only when our surrender to His divine Shakti is absolute, shall we have the right to live in His absolute presence. And only then can we see our work throw itself naturally, completely and simply into the mould of the Divine Will. There must, therefore, be stages and gradations in our approach to this perfection, as there are in the progress towards all other perfection on any plane of Nature. The vision of the full glory may come to us before, suddenly or slowly, once or often, but until the foundation is complete, it is a summary and concentrated, not a durable and all-enveloping experience, not a lasting presence. The amplitudes, the infinite contents of the Divine Revelation come afterwards and unroll gradually their power and their significance. Or, even, the steady vision can be there on the summits of our nature, but the perfect response of the lower members comes only by degrees. In all Yogas the first

* The Synthesis of Yoga, Chapter XI (Revised Version)

requisites are faith and patience. The ardours of the heart and the violences of the eager will that seek to take the kingdom of heaven by storm can have miserable reactions if they disdain to support their vehemence on these humbler and quieter auxiliaries. And in the long and difficult integral Yoga there must be an integral faith and an unshakable patience.

It is difficult to acquire or to practise this faith and steadfastness on the rough and narrow path of Yoga because of the impatience of both heart and mind and the eager but faltering will of our rajasic nature. The vital nature of man hungers always for the fruit of its labour and, if the fruit appears to be denied or long delayed, he loses faith in the ideal and in the guidance. For, his mind judges always by the appearance of things, since that is the first ingrained habit of the intellectual reason in which he so inordinately trusts. Nothing is easier for us than to accuse God in our hearts when we suffer long or stumble in the darkness or to abjure the ideal that we have set before us. For we say, "I have trusted to the Highest and I am betrayed into suffering and sin and error." Or else, "I have staked my whole life on an idea which the stern facts of experience contradict and discourage. It would have been better to be as other men are who accept their limitations and walk on the firm ground of normal experience." In such moments—and they are sometimes frequent and long—all the higher experience is forgotten and the heart concentrates itself in its own bitterness. It is in these dark passages that it is possible to fall for good or to turn back from the divine labour.

If one has walked long and steadily in the path, the faith of the heart will remain under the fiercest adverse pressure; even if it is concealed or apparently overborne, it will take the first opportunity to re-emerge. For, something higher than either heart or intellect upholds it in spite of the worst stumblings and through the most prolonged failure. But even to the experienced sadhaka such falterings or overcloudings bring a retardation of his progress and they are exceedingly dangerous to the novice. It is therefore necessary from the beginning to understand and accept the arduous difficulty of the path and to feel the need of a faith which to the intellect may seem blind, but yet is wiser than our reasoning intelligence. For, this faith is a support from above; it is the brilliant shadow thrown by a secret light that exceeds the intellect and its data; it is the heart of a hidden knowledge that is not at the mercy of immediate appearances. Our faith, persevering, will be justified in its works and will be lifted and transfigured at last into the self-revelation of a divine knowledge. Always we must adhere to the injunction of the Gita, "Yoga must be continually applied with a heart free from despondent sinking." Always we must repeat to the doubting intellect the promise of the Master, "I will surely deliver thee

from all sin and evil; do not grieve." At the end, the flickerings of faith will cease; for we shall see His face and feel always the Divine Presence.

* * * *

The Master of our works respects our nature even when He is transforming it; He works always through the nature and not by any arbitrary caprice. This imperfect nature of ours contains the materials of our perfection, but inchoate, distorted, misplaced, thrown together in disorder or a poor imperfect order. All this material has to be patiently perfected, purified, reorganised, new-moulded and transformed, not hacked and hewn and slain or mutilated, not obliterated by simple coercion and denial. This world and we who live in it are His creation and manifestation, and He deals with it and us in a way our narrow and ignorant mind cannot understand unless it falls silent and opens to a divine knowledge. In our errors is the substance of a truth which labours to reveal its meaning to our groping intelligence. The human intellect cuts out the error and the truth with it and replaces it by another half-truth half-error; but the Divine Wisdom suffers our mistakes to continue until we are able to arrive at the truth hidden and protected under every false cover. Our sins are the misdirected steps of a seeking Power that aims, not at sin, but at perfection, at something that we might call a divine virtue. Often they are the veils of a quality that has to be transformed and delivered out of this ugly disguise: otherwise, in the perfect providence of things, they would not have been suffered to exist or to continue. The Master of our works is neither a blunderer nor an indifferent witness nor a dallier with the luxury of unneeded evils. He is wiser than our reason and wiser than our virtue.

Our nature is not only mistaken in will and ignorant in knowledge but weak in power; but the Divine Force is there and will lead us if we trust in it and will use our deficiencies and our powers for the divine purpose. If we fail, in our immediate aim, it is because He has intended the failure; often our failure or ill-result is the right road to a truer issue than an immediate and complete success would have put in our reach. If we suffer, it is because something in us has to be prepared for a rarer possibility of delight. If we stumble, it is to learn in the end the secret of a more perfect walking. Let us not be in too furious a haste to acquire even peace, purity and perfection. Peace must be ours, but not the peace of an empty or devastated nature or of slain or mutilated capacities incapable of unrest because we have made them incapable of intensity and fire and force. Purity must be our aim, but not the purity of a void or of a bleak and rigid coldness. Perfection is demanded of us, but not the perfection that can exist only by confining its scope within narrow limits or putting an arbitrary full

stop to the ever self-extending scroll of the Infinite. Our object is to change into the divine nature, but the divine nature is not a mental or moral but a spiritual condition, difficult to achieve, difficult even to conceive by our intelligence. The Master of our work and our Yoga knows the thing to be done, and we must allow Him to do it in us by His own means and His own manner.

The movement of the Ignorance is egoistic at its core and nothing is more difficult for us than to get rid of egoism while yet we admit personality and adhere to action in the half-light and half-force of our unfinished nature. It is easier to starve the ego by renouncing the impulse to act or to kill it by cutting away from us all movement of personality. It is easier to exalt it into self-forgetfulness immersed in a trance of peace or an ecstasy of divine Love. But our more difficult problem is to liberate the true Person and attain to a divine manhood which shall be the pure vessel of a divine force and the perfect instrument of a divine action. Step after step has to be firmly taken; difficulty after difficulty has to be entirely experienced and entirely mastered. Only the Divine Wisdom and Power can do this for us and it will do it if we yield to it in an entire faith and follow and assent to its workings with a constant courage and patience.

The first step on this long path is to consecrate all our works as a sacrifice to the Divine in us and in the world; this is an attitude of the mind and heart, not too difficult to initiate, but very difficult to make absolutely sincere and all-pervasive. The second step is to renounce attachment to the fruit of our works; for, the only true, inevitable and utterly desirable fruit of sacrifice is—the one thing needful—the Divine Presence and the Divine Consciousness and Power in us, and if that is gained, all else will be added. This is a transformation of the egoistic will in our vital being, our desire-soul and desire-nature, and it is far more difficult than the other. The third step is to get rid of the central egoism and even the ego-sense of the worker. That is the most difficult transformation of all and cannot be perfectly done if the first two steps have not been taken; but these first steps too cannot be completed unless the third comes in to crown the movement and, by the extinction of egoism, eradicates the very origin of desire. Only when the small ego-sense is rooted out from the nature, can the seeker know his true person that stands above as a portion and power of the Divine, and renounce all motive-force other than the will of the Divine Shakti.

* * *

There are gradations in this last integralising movement; for it cannot be done at once or without long approaches that bring it progressively nearer and make it at last possible. The first attitude to be taken is to cease

to regard ourselves as the worker and firmly to realise that we are only one instrument of the cosmic Force. At first it is not the one Force but many cosmic forces that seem to move us; but these may be turned into feeders of the ego and this vision liberates the mind but not the rest of the nature. Even when we become aware of all as the working of one cosmic Force and of the Divine behind it, that too need not liberate. If the egoism of the worker disappears, the egoism of the instrument may replace it or else prolong it in a disguise. The life of the world has been full of instances of egoism of this kind and it can be more engrossing and enormous than any other; there is the same danger in Yoga. A man becomes a leader of men or eminent in a large or lesser circle and feels himself full of a power that he knows to be beyond his own ego-force; he may be aware of a Fate acting through him or a Will mysterious and unfathomable or a Light within of great brilliance. There are extraordinary results of his thoughts, his actions or his creative genius. He effects some tremendous destruction that clears the path for humanity or some great construction that becomes its momentary resting-place. He is a scourge or he is a bringer of light and healing, a creator of beauty or a messenger of knowledge. Or, if his work and its effects are on a lesser scale and have a limited field, still they are attended by the strong sense that he is an instrument and chosen for his mission or his labour. Men who have this destiny and these powers come easily to believe and declare themselves to be mere instruments in the hand of God or of Fate: but even in the declaration we can see that there can intrude or take refuge an intenser and more exaggerated egoism than ordinary men have the courage to assert or the strength to house within them. And often if men of this kind speak of God, it is to erect an image of Him which is really nothing but a huge shadow of themselves or their own nature, a sustaining Deific Essence of their own type of will and thought and quality and force. This magnified image of their ego is the Master whom they serve. This happens only too often in Yoga to strong but crude vital natures or minds too easily exalted when they allow ambition, pride or the desire of greatness to enter into their spiritual seeking and vitiate its purity of motive; a magnified ego stands between them and their true being and grasps for its own personal purpose the strength from a greater unseen Power, divine or undivine, acting through them of which they become vaguely or intensely aware. An intellectual perception or vital sense of a Force greater than ours and of ourselves as moved by it is not sufficient to liberate from the ego.

This perception, this sense of a greater Power in us or above and moving us, is not a hallucination or a megalomania. Those who thus feel and see have a larger sight than ordinary men and have advanced a step beyond the limited physical intelligence, but theirs is not the plenary vision or

the direct experience. For, because they are not clear in mind and aware in the soul, because their awakening is more in the vital parts than into the spiritual substance of Self, they cannot be the conscious instruments of the Divine or come face to face with the Master, but are used through their fallible and imperfect nature. The most they see of the Divinity is a Fate or a cosmic Force or else they give his name to a limited Godhead or, worse, to a titanic or demoniac Power that veils him. Even certain religious founders have erected the image of the God of a sect or a national God or a Power of terror and punishment or a Numen of sattwic love and mercy and virtue and seem not to have seen the One and Eternal. The Divine accepts the image they make of Him and does His work in them through that medium, but, since the one Force is felt and acts in their imperfect nature but more intensely than in others, the motive principle of egoism too can be more intense in them than in others. An exalted rajasic or sattwic ego still holds them and stands between them and the integral Truth. Even this is something, a beginning, although far from the true and perfect experience. A much worse thing may befall those who break something of the human bonds but have not purity and have not the knowledge, for they may become instruments, but not of the Divine; too often, using His name, they serve unconsciously his Masks and black Contraries, the Powers of Darkness.

Our nature must house the cosmic Force but not in its lower aspect or in its rajasic or sattwic movement; it must serve the universal Will, but in the light of a greater liberating knowledge. There must be no egoism of any kind in the attitude of the instrument, even when we are fully conscious of the greatness of the Force within us. Every man is knowingly or unknowingly the instrument of a universal Power and, apart from the inner Presence, there is no such essential difference between one action and another, one kind of instrumentation and another as would warrant the folly of an egoistic pride. The difference between knowledge and ignorance is a grace of the Spirit; the breath of divine Power blows where it lists and fills today one and tomorrow another with the word or the puissance. If the potter shapes one pot more perfectly than another, the merit lies not in the vessel but the maker. The attitude of our mind must not be "This is my strength" or "Behold God's power in me", but rather "A Divine Power works in this mind and body and it is the same that works in all men and in the animal, in the plant and in the metal, in conscious and living things and in things appearing to be inconscient and inanimate." This large view of the One working in all and of the whole world as the equal instrument of a divine action and gradual self-expression, if it becomes our entire experience, will help to eliminate all rajasic egoism out of us and even the sattwic ego-sense will begin to pass away from our nature.

The elimination of this form of ego leads straight towards the true instrumental action which is the essence of a perfect Karmayoga. For while we cherish the instrumental ego, we may pretend to ourselves that we are conscious instruments of the Divine, but in reality we are trying to make of the Divine Shakti an instrument of our own desires or our egoistic purpose. And even if the ego is subjected but not eliminated, we may indeed be engines of the divine Work, but we shall be imperfect tools and deflect or impair the working by our mental errors, our vital distortions or the obstinate incapacities of our physical nature. If this ego disappears, then we can truly become, not only pure instruments consciously consenting to every turn of the divine Hand that moves us, but aware of our true nature, conscious portions of the one Eternal and Infinite put out in herself for her works by the supreme Shakti.

* * *

There is another greater step to be taken after the surrender of our instrumental ego to the Divine Shakti. It is not enough to know her as the one Cosmic Force that moves us and all creatures on the planes of mind, life and matter; for this is the lower Nature and, although the Divine Knowledge, Light, Power are there concealed and at work in the Ignorance and can break partly its veil and manifest something of their true character or descend from above and uplift these inferior workings, yet, even if we realise the One in a spiritualised mind, a spiritualised life-movement, a spiritualised body-consciousness, an imperfection remains in the dynamic parts. There is a stumbling response to the Supreme Power, a veil over the face of the Divine, a constant mixture of the Ignorance. It is only when we open to the Divine Shakti in the truth of her force that transcends this lower Prakriti that we can be perfect instruments of her power and knowledge.

Not only liberation but perfection must be the aim of the Karmayoga. The Divine works through our nature and according to our nature; if our nature is imperfect, the work also will be imperfect, mixed, inadequate. Even it may be marred by gross errors, falsehoods, moral weaknesses, diverting influences. The work of the Divine will be done in us even then, but according to our weakness, not according to the strength and purity of its source. If ours were not an integral Yoga, if we sought only the liberation of the self within us or the motionless existence of Purusha separated from Prakriti, this dynamic imperfection might not matter. Calm, nntroubled, not depressed, not elated, refusing to accept the perfection or imperfection, fault or merit, sin or virtue as ours, perceiving that it is the modes of Nature working in the field of her modes that make this mixture,

we could withdraw into the silence of the spirit and, pure, untouched, witness only the workings of Prakriti. But in an integral realisation this can only be a step on the way, not our last resting-place. For we aim at the divine realisation not only in the immobility of the Spirit, but also in the movement of Nature. And this cannot be altogether until we can feel the presence and power of the Divine in every step, motion, figure of our activities, in every turn of our will, in every thought, feeling and impulse. No doubt, we can feel that in a sense even in the nature of the Ignorance, but it is the divine Power and Presence in a disguise, a diminution, an inferior figure. Ours is a greater demand, that our nature shall be a power of the Divine in the Truth of the Divine, in the Light, in the force of the eternal self-conscient Will, in the wideness of the sempiternal Knowledge.

After the removal of the veil of ego, the removal of the veil of Nature and her inferior modes that govern our mind, life and body. As soon as the limits of the ego begin to fade, we see how that veil is constituted and detect the action of cosmic Nature in us, and in or behind cosmic Nature we sense the presence of the cosmic Self and the dynamisms of the world-pervading Ishwara. The Master of the instrument stands behind all this working, and even within the working there is His touch and the drive of a great guiding or disposing Influence. It is no longer ego or ego-force that we serve; we obey the World-Master and his evolutionary impulse. At each step we say in the language of the Sanskrit verse, "Even as I am appointed by Thee seated in my heart, so, O Lord, I act." But still this action may be of two very different kinds, one only illumined, the other transformed and uplifted into a greater supernature. For, we may keep on in the way of action upheld and followed by our nature when by her and her illusion of egoism we were "turned as if mounted on a machine," but now with a perfect understanding of it and its utilisation for his world purposes by the Master of works whom we feel behind it. This is indeed as far as even many great Yogis have reached on the levels of spiritualised mind; but it need not be so always, for there is a greater supramental possibility. It is possible to rise beyond spiritualised mind and to act spontaneously in the living presence of the original divine Truth-Force of the Supreme Mother. Our motion one with her motion and merged in it, our will one with her will, our energy absolved in her energy, we shall feel her working through us as the Divine manifest in a supreme Wisdom-Power, and we shall be aware of the transformed mind, life and body only as the channels of a supreme Light and Force beyond them, infallible in its steps because transcendent and total in its knowledge. Of this Light and Force we shall not only be the recipients, channels, instruments, but become a part of it in a supreme uplifted abiding experience.

Already, before we reach this last perfection, we can have the union with

the Divine in works in its extreme wideness, if not yet on its most luminous heights; for we perceive no longer merely Nature or the modes of Nature, but become conscious, in our physical movements, in our nervous and vital reactions, in our mental workings, of a Force greater than body, mind and life which takes hold of our limited instruments and drives all their motions. There is no longer the sense of ourselves moving, thinking or feeling but of that moving, feeling and thinking in us. This force that we feel is the universal Force of the Divine, which, veiled or unveiled, acting directly or permitting the use of its powers by beings in the cosmos, is the one Energy that alone exists and alone makes universal or individual action possible. For this force is the Divine Itself in the body of Its power; all is that power of act, power of thought and knowledge, power of mastery and enjoyment, power of love. Conscious always and in everything, in ourselves and in others, of the Master of Works possessing, inhabiting, enjoying through this Force that is Himself, becoming through it all existences and all happenings, we shall have arrived at the divine union through works and achieved by that fulfilment in works all that others have gained through absolute devotion or through pure knowledge. But there is still another step that calls us, an ascent out of this cosmic identity into the identity of the divine Transcendence. The Master of our works and our being is not merely a Godhead here within us, nor is he merely a cosmic Spirit or some kind of universal Power. The world and the Divine are not one and the same thing, as a certain kind of pantheistic thinking would like to believe. The world is an emanation; it depends upon something that manifests in it but is not limited by it: the Divine is not here alone; there is a Beyond, an eternal Transcendence. The individual being also in its spiritual part is not a formation in the cosmic existence—our ego, our mind, our life, our body are that; but the immutable spirit, the imperishable soul in us has come out of the Transcendence.

SRI AUROBINDO

THE FUTURE POETRY*

(Continued)

NEW BIRTH OR DECADENCE

AT this point then we stand in the evolution of English poetry. Its course, we can see, is only one line of a common evolution. Poetry like everything else in man evolves. But poetry is a psychological phenomenon, the poetic impulse a highly charged force of expression of the mind and soul of man, and therefore in trying to follow out its line of evolution it is the development of the psychological motive and power, it is the kind of feeling, vision, mentality which is seeking in it for its word and idea and form of beauty and it is the power of the soul through which it finds expression or the level of mind from which it speaks which we must distinguish to get a right idea of the progress of poetry. All else is subsidiary, variations of rhythm, language, structure; they are the form, the vehicle, they derive subtly and get their character and meaning from the psychological power and the fundamental motive.

If poetry is a highly charged power of art, aesthetic expression of the soul of man, it must follow in its course of evolution the development of that soul. I put it that from this point of view the soul of man like the soul of Nature can be regarded as an unfolding of the spirit in the material world. He turns the first view on the outward physical world and on his own life of outward action. He can reach great heights in this kind of world, and in this type we have Homer. Arrived at a greater depth of living there is a greater heightening of the desire-soul in him which first forces itself on his introspection when he begins to go inward. Poetry too takes this turn, rises and deepens to a new kind of greatness; and at the summit in this kind we have Shakespeare.

This way of seeing and creating cannot permanently hold the greater activities of the mental being. He ceases to identify himself entirely with the passion, the emotion, the thought-suggestions of life, for he needs to know from a freer height what it is and what he is, to see with the calm eye of his reason, to probe, to analyse. He does this at first on large and comparatively bare lines for a strong and provisionally adequate view. Poetry following this movement takes on the lucid, restrained, intellectual and ideal classic form, of clear beauty and the vision of the satisfied intelligence; that is the greatness of the Greek and Latin poets. But afterwards the intelligence

* A summary of Sri Aurobindo's *The Future Poetry* ("Arya" 1917-1920)

gets more complex and comprehensive, seeks to work in a global way, opens itself to all manner of possibilities of truth. This is the type of modern intellectualism.

The poetry which arises out of this new mentality is full of a teeming many-sided poetic ideation, makes many experiments and combinations, passes through many phases. The true classic form is then no longer possible; for, the new spirit is too crowded with subtle thought-matter, too brooding, sensitive, responsive to many things. No new Parthenon can be built. The romantic strain is a part of this wider intelligence, but the pure and genuine romanticism of the life-spirit which cares nothing for thought except in so far as it enriches its own being, is also no longer possible. It may try to get back to that, but it cannot remain long alive. That is the secret of the failure of modern romanticism in Germany and France. In England with the greater spontaneity of its poetic spirit the mistake never went so far as in these countries. The poetry of the time of Wordsworth and Shelley is sometimes called romantic poetry, but it was not so in its essence, but only in certain of its moods and motives. It lives really by its greater and more characteristic element, by its half-spiritual turn. Only in drama was there, owing to the prestige of Shakespeare, an attempt at pure romanticism, and therefore in this domain nothing great and living could be done, but only a record of failures. Realism is more native to this kind of intelligence, and it invades poetry too to a certain extent, but if it dominates, then poetry must decline and cease. The poetry of an age of many-sidedness can live only by its many-sidedness and by making everything, as it comes, a new material for the aesthetic creations of the observing, thinking, critical intelligence.

But then comes now the vital question in this cultural evolution—in what is this intellectualism to culminate. The intellect moves naturally between two limits, the abstractions or solving analysis of the reason and the domain of positive and practical reality; its greatest work has been achieved either in philosophy, critical thought or Science. The age of developed intellectualism in Greece killed poetry; philosophy occupied the field. In the more rich and complex modern mind this result could not so easily come and has not yet come. In this age due to a want of agreement between the own essential spirit of poetry and the spirit of the age a certain decline in the power, importance and effectiveness of poetry has been felt. Throughout the later nineteenth century one observes a constant apprehension of approaching aesthetic decadence, a tendency to be on the look-out for it and to find the signs of it in innovations and new turns in art and poetry, itself due to a sense of some difficulty, limitation and unease. At one time it was hardily predicted that poetry must necessarily decline and give place to science. On the opposite side it was sometimes

suggested that a poetic criticism of life, using the materials of science, which might fill the place of philosophy and religion that were supposed for a time to be dead or dying powers in human nature, might live on. But this itself meant a deviation from the true law of aesthetic creation and only a more protracted decadence.

Behind these uneasy suggestions lay the one fact that an age of reason dominated by the critical, scientific or philosophic intelligence is ordinarily unfavourable to great poetic creation. The pure intellect cannot create poetry. Poetry is an interpreter of truth, it deals not so much with things thought as with things seen, not with the authenticities of the analytical mind, but with the authenticities of the synthetic vision and the seeing spirit. And therefore when the general activity of thought runs predominantly onto the former kind, the works of the latter are apt to proceed under rather anaemic conditions.

But this incompatibility is not the last word of the matter. The truth which poetry expresses takes two forms, the truth of life and the truth of that which works in life, the truth of the inner spirit. Even the first, which is common and natural as an initial movement, does bring some light of intuitive things. But also poetry may go back into the truth of the inner spirit. That is the effort to which it seems to be turning now in its most characteristic, effective and beautiful manifestations, in Whitman, Carpenter, some of the recent French poets, Tagore, Yeats, A.E., Meredith and others. But it cannot fully develop unless the general mind of the age takes that turn. There are signs that this will indeed be the outcome of the new direction taken by the modern mind. The human intelligence seems on the verge of an attempt to rise through the intellect to an intuitive mentality. (This, however, does not mean any sacrifice of the gains of the past.) There are critics who regard this tendency as only another sign of decadence. But this is to suppose that poetry can only repeat what it has done in the past and that a clear, strong or brilliant dealing with the outer mind and world is its last word and the one condition of its healthy creativeness. There is much that is morbid, perverse or unsound in some recent poetry; but this comes from an artificial prolongation of the past or a temporary mixed straining. An age which brings in large and new vital and spiritual truths, opens vast untrod ranges to sight and imagination, is not likely to be an age of decadence and a poetry that voices these things is not likely to be a poetry of decadence.

The intuitive poetry of the future, supposing it to emerge successfully from its present incubation, will not be a mystic poetry recondite in expression or quite remote from the earthly life of man. (Mysticism in its unfavourable sense comes when we glimpse but do not intimately realise, when we have the revelation, but not the inspiration, the sight but not

the word; and remoteness comes when we cannot relate the spirit with life.) But the new age is not that of glimpses, but of a luminous totality. The aesthetic mind, whether it takes form in the word of the poet or in the word of the illumined thinker, the prophet or the seer, can be one of the main gateways. And since the age will aim at a harmonious totality of being, the whole field of existence will be open for its poetry's subject. It is not a close, even a high close and ending in this or any field that the future offers to us, but a new and higher evolution, a second and greater birth of all man's powers and his being and action and creation.

THE IDEAL SPIRIT OF POETRY

The gods of life and still more the gods of mind are so incalculably self-creative that to attempt to presage the future turns or developments in any of their fields is always hazardous. We can see where we stand today, but we cannot tell where we shall stand a quarter of a century hence. All that one can do is to distinguish for oneself some possibilities that lie before the poetic mind of the race and to figure out what it can achieve if it chooses to follow out certain great openings which the genius of recent and contemporary poets has made free to us.

What would be the ideal spirit of poetry in an age of increasingly intuitive mind? For the possibility of such an age is that on which we have been dwelling. I have spoken in the beginning of the mantra as an inspired and revealed and visioned thinking, attended by a realisation, to use the ponderous but necessary modern word, of some inmost truth of God and self and man and Nature. And in the mind too of the fit outward hearer who listens to the word of the poet seer, these three must come together, if our word is a real mantra; the sight of the inmost truth must accompany the hearing, the possession of the inmost spirit of it by the mind and its coming home to the soul must accompany or follow immediately upon the rhythmic message of the Word and the mind's sight of the Truth. That may sound a rather mystic account of the matter, but substantially there could hardly be a more complete description of the birth and effect of the inspired and revealing word and it might be applied, though usually on a more lowered scale than was intended by the Vedic Rishis, to all the highest outbursts of a really great poetry.

This is a theory of *mantric* poetry, which is very different from any that we now hold, a sacred or hieratic *ars poetica* possible only in earlier ages of faith. And perhaps no thinking age has been so far removed from any such view of our life as the one through which we have now recently passed. And yet curiously enough, it is still to something very like the effort which

was the soul of the Vedic or at least the Vedantic mind that we almost appear to be on the point of turning back in the circle of our course. The new ideals of the race seem already to be affected by some first bright shadow of these things, and even though it be only a tinge, there is every sign that this tinge will deepen and grow.

But this new vision will not be as in the old times something hieratically remote, mystic, inward, shielded from the profane, but rather a sight which will endeavour to draw these godheads again to close and familiar intimacy with our earth. In the old days these things were mysteries, which men left to the few, to the initiates and by so leaving them lost sight of them in the end, but the turn of this new mind towards an open realisation may well lead to an age in which man as a race will try to live and create in a greater Truth than has yet governed our kind.

And if this takes place or even if there is some strong mental movement towards it, poetry may recover something of an old sacred prestige. There will be no doubt plenty of poetical writing which will follow the old lines, and it is as well that it should be so, but also there may now emerge too the poet who is also Rishi, master-singer of the Truth, hierophant and magician of a diviner truth and a more universal beauty. There has no doubt always been something of that in the greatest masters of poetry in the great ages, but to fulfil such a role has not often been the one fountain idea of their function.

But there must intervene a poetry which will lead man towards the new creation from the present faint beginnings. It will be aided by new views in philosophy, a changed and extended spirit in science and new revelations in other arts, in music, painting, architecture, sculpture, as well as high new ideals in life and new powers of a reviving but no longer limited or obscurantist religious mind. An intuitive revealing poetry of the kind which we have in view would voice a supreme harmony of five eternal powers, Truth, Beauty, Delight, Life and Spirit, which are indeed the five great ideal lamps or rather the five suns of poetry. And towards three of them the higher mind of the race is in many directions turning its thought and with a new kind of force of insistence. Much has been known and discovered of a kind which had not been found or had only been glimpsed before. Now we are moving back from the physical obsession to the consciousness that there is a soul and a greater self within us and the universe which finds expression here in the life and the body.

We have no longer any ascetic quarrel with our mother earth; a spirit which is all life because it is greater than all life, is rather the truth in which we shall most powerfully live. Poetry and art most of all are powers that can help to bring this truth home to the mind of man and this mediation between the truth of the spirit and the truth of life will be one of

the chief functions of the poetry of the future.

The two other sister lamps of God, colour suns of the Ideal—Beauty and Delight—are also needed. Truth and Life have not their perfection unless they are suffused and filled with the completing power of delight and the fine power of beauty. For, the ancient Indian idea is absolutely true that delight, Ananda, is the inmost expression and creative nature of the free self, because it is the very essence of the original being of the Spirit. It is the significance and spiritual function of poetry to liberate man into pure delight and bring beauty into his life. Only there are grades and heights here as in everything else.

These powers can indeed be possessed in every scale, can break out into a strong flame of manifestation, whatever the frame of sight: whether it be Homer chanting of the heroes in a god-moved battle before Troy and of Odysseus wandering among the wonders of remote and magic isles with his heart always turned to his lost and far-off human earth, or Shakespeare riding on a surge of the manifold colour and music and passion of life, or Dante errant mid his terrible or beatific visions of Hell and Purgatory and Paradise, or Valmiki singing of the ideal man embodying God and egoistic giant Rakshasa embodying only fierce self-will approaching each other from their different centres of life and in their different law of being for the struggle desired by the gods, or some mystic Vamadeva or Vishwamitra voicing in strange vivid now-forgotten symbols the action of the gods and the glories of the Truth, the battle and the journey to the Light, the double riches and the sacrificial climbing of the soul to Immortality.

The poetry of the future, if it can keep the amplitudes of its breadth and the nearness of its touch, will be a poetry of a new largest vision of self and Nature and God and the things which is offering itself to man and of its possible realisation in a nobler and more divine manhood. It need not be at all something high and remote or beautifully and delicately intangible, or not that alone. It will take up and transform the secrets of the older poets and find new and undiscovered secrets, transfigure the old rhythms. This at least is its possible ideal endeavour, and then the attempt itself would be a rejuvenating elixir and put the poetic spirit once more in the shining front of the powers and guides of the ever-progressing soul of humanity.

SISIR KUMAR GHOSH

"FREEWILL" IN SRI AUROBINDO'S VISION

SRI Aurobindo's views on the crucial choice that must be made of the way of living, if we are really to be fulfilled and the calls of existence are truly to be answered, are clear to most of us: we sum them up as "the Integral Yoga." But we are not equally familiar with his outlook on the power to choose. Wherever there is the activity of the will, there is the phenomenon of choosing—and yet there is no warrant in this for believing that the choice is freely made and not occasioned by subtle or unknown factors other than our will itself. How exactly does Sri Aurobindo stand with regard to the problem whether the human will is free?

A couple of points which he puts before us may appear, in isolation and at face-value, to deny man freewill altogether. First, genuine freedom of will as of consciousness and delight and being can only be in a divine state, for only the Divine is genuinely free; and so long as we are in the unregenerate condition, which is subject to ego and desire and the drive of Nature, of Prakriti, untransformed by the Luminous and the Eternal, we can never speak of authentic freewill. Second, once we postulate a divine Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence, we must conclude it to have originated and decreed whatever arises and acts in the universe which is its emanation. Is there then any room left in us for freewill as usually understood? If no genuine freewill can be except in the freedom of the Divine, can we be thought free even to choose that freedom or stay away from it? Again, if all things are originally decreed by the Divine, is not our feeling of being real doers a delusion given us for some purpose of the Divine's world-play? This question is akin to the time-old one: if God, having all-knowledge, has foreseen everything, have we any power to deviate from His plan, and do we not have inevitably to carry out the details of it? Many Christian theologians have attempted to solve the dilemma: some have said that God's knowledge is in eternity and eternity is different from time and such knowledge does not clash with free action within a different order of being; others have said, "God cannot be a true creator if He cannot create creators." No proposition of this type is in itself satisfactory, though each may have a faint inkling of some truth which is ill-caught and ill-expressed by it. To drive a wedge between God's all-knowledge in eternity and man's actions in time is to indulge in a quibble: if by eternity is meant a status in which past and present and future are not a sequence but an all-at-once, an endless total Now, then every "now"

of our ordinary life as well as of all existence is not something fixed by God from the past, but would it cease to be actuated by Him in the very present? God's hold from the past is avoided; yet unless eternity and His all-knowledge are rendered otiose and meaningless, His hold at every present moment remains complete. In the face of this complete hold, the proposition about God being no creator unless creators are created by Him is no more than a brilliant epigram if understood in a Christian context. Christianity conceives the human soul as a creature brought into existence by God at some point of time and existing with some resemblance to Him yet with no essential identity with Him. Such a soul cannot be a creator in any Godlike sense and must be entirely subject to God's endless total Now underlying and actuating all its "nows" or else to His foreknowledge in the past determining its career.

The primary *sine qua non* to be recognised for making any freewill valid is: God who originates and decrees everything must somehow be not different from our own souls. Without identity with God no freewill anywhere can be. This identity would be the truth behind the epigram about creators: only, that epigram does not openly put man's soul on a par with the Divine, does not conceive it as an eternal aspect of the Divine—an eternal aspect possible because the Divine would Himself be conceived as simultaneously single and multiple, unitary yet many-poised, essentially one but numerically not bound by oneness. Does Sri Aurobindo grant the identity? It is a cardinal characteristic of his vision, bound up with God's being One-in-Many. Unless God is at the same time multiple and single, the manifold world would have no basis in God. We should have to rest with a fundamental dualism or resort to an illusionist theory of the manifold world. Even an illusion, however, must have at least a subjective existence and it can exist, be it ever so subjectively, in nothing save God if He is the Sole Reality, and to understand such an existing is as much a hurdle as to understand God's being One-in-Many. Besides, our evolution, difficult and beset with evil and suffering, out of the Inconscient, demands that God should be such: "to explain it", says Sri Aurobindo, "there must be two elements, a conscious assent by the soul to this manifestation and a reason in the All-Wisdom that makes the play significant and intelligible." The reason in the All-Wisdom is not here our direct concern, though we may mention that it is the extreme attractiveness of the strenuous joy lying in self-concealing and self-finding, the joy which would be at the utmost when the self-concealing is the awful plunge into the sheer Inconscient and the self-finding is through the absolute opposite of the Divine. What is of pertinence to the issue at stake is the soul's conscious assent. Can the assent be an explanatory feature and a meaningful fact under any circumstance other than that the soul is free to will? And can the soul be free unless it

is not created at a certain point of time to be sent willy-nilly on a world-journey through imperfection but is a particular eternal aspect of the Divine, a mode of His manyness, so that the Divine's fiat and the soul's assent are automatically the same thing? Sri Aurobindo's vision, therefore, is not inimical to the primary *sine qua non* for freewill, and his pronouncement on the universe's utter dependence on God's decree is not deterministic when taken in combination with his full outlook.

But a second indispensable condition has to be satisfied for freewill's validity. It is obvious that we, as we are from day to day, cannot be described as souls that are eternal aspects of the Divine. We are too obscure and weak and perverted: we have a tremendously long way to go to realise ourselves as individualised divinities. Individualised divinities we may be in our secret recesses: our daily surface existence is pretty far from Godliness. Hence the important query: does our souls' assent from their God-poise to the strange cosmic play confer on what we do in even our ordinary moments a true freewill? All our actions are really of our souls carrying out the free decisions they have taken in their rôle of divine creators; but, on our surface, are we in any sense our own souls and do we share at least some of their freewill? No freewill can be in us if even as we are, if even in our state that is human and not ostensibly divine, we have no power, however small, to choose or not to choose. Freewill can have little relevance to us if our normal selves are wanting in some touch of identity with our souls that are essentially identical with God: to exercise any freewill our ordinary moments must be identical in some degree or other with God Himself! Does Sri Aurobindo take them to be thus identical? Let us glance at his scheme of our selfhood, our soulship. Above all manifestation and evolution is the Jivatman, our highest self or soul, the individualised divinity, a supreme transcendental form in the play of the One as the Many. Presiding over manifestation and evolution, the Jivatman projects a representative into the cosmic process: this representative is the Antaratman, our inmost or deepest self or soul with all the potentialities of the Divine in it, and it passes from birth to birth, making for evolutionary purposes a bright nucleus round which the duller tones of mind-stuff, vitality-stuff and matter-stuff are gathered, infusing its own sweetness and light into them stage by stage and developing them to serve as its transparent mediums. Through experience in birth after birth the nucleus too grows and will at last be able to offer to the Supreme, whence the Antaratman came, a full manifested personality—many-sided though single, individualised yet embracing all cosmos and partaking of all Transcendence beyond both individuality and cosmicity in time. But, while dealing with mind-stuff, vitality-stuff and matter-stuff, this true psyche here below makes a projection of itself into them, a projection which gets steeped in their tones. Now, all existence has a biune

reality—Purusha and Prakriti, conscious being and Nature. Wherever consciousness plays, this biune reality is present in one form or another, openly concordant or apparently divided. We have thus in the realm of evolutionary existence a mental being facing mental Nature, a vital being fronting vital Nature, a physical being opposite physical Nature: these beings are experienced according as our consciousness assumes a mental or vital or physical poise. And all of them are representatives of the true psychic Purusha. When the multi-possible Purusha of us with its centre in the psychic being stands fully back, uninvolved in Prakriti and lord of it, though not united altogether with the Jivatman above, we have a clear realisation of some measure of authentic freewill, because that uninvolved and masterful Purusha, centrally psychic, is in rapport with the totally free Jivatman. But even when the projection of the psyche into mind, vitality and matter acts as something involved in Prakriti and is the stumbling surface being of us, the self as ordinarily cognised, then also it carries a touch of freedom with it; for that involvement, that enslavement, is freely made and there remains with us the power to withold sanction to the current play of Nature in our members and to bring about a turn towards the Perfect, the Divine, the Un-enslaved. Precisely on that power is based Sri Aurobindo's appeal to us to lead the life divine instead of the life human. If it is asked what becomes of Sri Aurobindo's assertion that only in a divine state there can be genuine freedom of will, the answer is: he evidently means by genuine freedom of will a quality of the full experience of our being not what we apparently are at present but a luminous superhuman entity that is cosmic while being individual, and transcendental while being cosmic. Such freedom we cannot experience when we are unregenerate. In our present state, obscure and weak and perverted, we are divorced from the light and strength and beauty that we are on our ultimate heights: we have not the absolute freedom of our own hidden Infinite, nor have we the puissance and prerogative of our own psychic depths; still, a dim vestige we do possess of what we have put behind and beyond us and part of the vestige is an ability to give to Prakriti's fluctuations of inertia, vehemence and harmony a Yes or a No and gradually effect a passage from our human imperfection to a supernal splendour. No freewill other than this bare ability is ours, but it is freewill none the less. And at least a faint glimmer of freewill has indeed to be there in our surface existence if we are meant to be conscious co-operators in the work of rising from humanity to superhumanity and bringing into all our constituents what Sri Aurobindo terms the Supermind, the archetypal truth of all that we are in the evolutionary process. The free assenting highest soul of us, the Jivatman, that has been creative of the world-play from its eternal poise in the Divine, cannot but keep of its vast freewill a pin-point in conscious co-operators,

in minds that discriminate and argue and weigh, in beings that have enough detachment from Nature to at least enable them to study and judge Nature. On that pin-point the whole of mental human life is fulcrummed for activity, and the conceding of it is implied in the Aurobindonian outlook which holds our intelligent will to be a ray, deformed though it may be, of the Gnosis, the Supermind.

Two *sine qua nons* we have tabulated and both we have discovered to be granted by Sri Aurobindo. But there is a third which emerges from one special question concerning the dynamics of the world-play. Has the world-play been decreed from the past by God and is it going on inexorably since that old decree of the Eternal or does eternity connote an all-at-once, an endless total Now? If every "now" of ours were what our souls as portions of the Divine had foreseen and forefixed from the past and there were no endless total Now, there might be an experience of freewill by us since we would not be bound by any past other than that in which had acted our own divine selves with whom we would be having a pin-point contact. But an endless total Now can alone explain in entirety the sense we have of freewill in the "nows" of our common life, the sense that nothing of the past, even if the past be of our highest selves, wholly binds us and that at every moment we are creative of our actions. Of course, creativity in full cannot be felt by us from our poor human standing-ground; nevertheless, a tiny bit of it we would intensely feel only when our own highest selves would be acting in an endless total Now and not merely from a deific past. The truth behind the idea that eternity and time are different orders and God's foreknowledge in the former need not clash with man's freewill in the latter seems to be just this that for an entire explanation of the real creative feeling which we have, however pin-pointish, eternity should carry time in an all-at-once constituting an endless total Now: what the idea took no account of are the two other indispensables of freewill. Sri Aurobindo does take account of them: does he also envisage the last indispensable? In *The Life Divine* he distinguishes three statuses in God's eternity: a timeless immobile status, supremely self-absorbed, without developments of consciousness in movement or happening—a status of simultaneous integrality of time, which is a stable whole-consciousness of the successive relations of all things manifested—a status of processive movement of consciousness and its successive working out of what has been seen in the stable vision. Statuses second and third, combined, would give us an endless total Now underlying and actuating all the "nows" of the time-movement—Omniscience, Omnipotence and Omnipresence acting everywhere and in everything and at every moment but exceeding limitation by the moments and, while it spreads out a past, present and future, embracing them also in one whole. This one whole is the deific Ever-Present, with a pin-point

of which our poor human "now" coincides, acquiring thereby the fullest reality possible for its speck of freewill.

People might lift their hands in shock or protest, crying: "If all we do is, for Sri Aurobindo, traceable to the Divine's eternal fiat, the choice in an endless total Now of our highest selves, a faint spark of whom abides in the Tom, Dick and Harry that we are, what is there to make us choose good and reject evil? If we cannot have freewill of any kind unless the Divine be taken as somehow acting in us, would anything we freely do be bad or blamable?" The first answer is: there is a sense in which nothing is wrong, for spiritual realisation actually testifies that in a certain state of experience everything is perfect, Brahman is all and all is Brahman—but that sense is truly attained by an experience of the All-Brahman, not by a mere idea of Him, and so long as the experience is lacking we cannot speak, with living conviction or direct right, of everything being equally good. What is more, to have that very experience we have at each moment to stand away from egoistic desire which is the arch-vice, the subtle root of iniquity. To realise that all is Brahman we have to reject something as not Brahman! This paradox has to be accepted and it provides a hint that the cry of shock or protest is irrational. The irrationality resides in that the fact of Brahman being all and all being Brahman is considered not only without spiritual experience but also without another side of the divine reality. Brahman has projected in his infinity a negation of the essentially divine and an emergence of divine values from the Inconscient. According to this arrangement by Brahman there is a constant and persistent and ubiquitous fight between the Divine and the undivine, between good and evil. Of course by "good" we must not mean always what puritanism or prudery or pacifism or any rigid rule or code sets up for our guidance: we must mean some profound urge towards surpassing our ignorance, meanness, cruelty, incapacity, ugliness and becoming like Zoroaster, like Christ, like Buddha, like Sri Krishna or, best of all, like Sri Aurobindo. There is an incumbence on us to follow this urge, since the entire evolutionary process of the hidden and negated God holds it as its secret law and it is precisely because the attainment of the All-Brahman is also an evolutionary step, a finding of a certain side of divine reality which too was concealed, that paradoxically we have in even this attainment to follow that urge and choose good and reject evil. In man the mental being, the conscious self-evolver, the urge is an unavoidable open ingredient of his constitution and cannot help being insistent and deeply desirable. We may tend to justify the non-following of it by arguing from one half of God's truth: the vision of Pantheos. But when both halves are taken together and we do not overlook God from above calling to God from below to rise and evolve in the *milieu* of God that is all, then the urge to choose good and

reject evil is found to be a decree the soul in us has passed from the supramental identity-in-difference it enjoys within the multiple yet single Divine. Surely this decree is not the only one and even its overruling at times may be deemed after the event a valid soul-act subserving God's purpose, since in God's subtle play real good may come out of seeming evil; but before an act has happened and while alternatives are still felt as possible this decree is logically the most valid, the most to be regarded, in an evolutionary scheme of Upward no less than Onward. The overruling of it may, on a back-look, prove itself justified in God's complex economy, but the overruling can never be justifiable in the moment of action. If it can, the process of upward evolution by us would lose support altogether and could never be a plan of the supreme Creative Consciousness for our freewill to carry out.

K. D. SETHNA

SRI AUROBINDO

FIFTEENTH of August this year was the seventy-fifth birthday of Sri Aurobindo who some forty years ago counted for so much in the national life of India. After his sudden departure from the political field of India in 1910, to the Indian people and to the world at large he has remained a mystery. The fact that an Ashram has grown around him at Pondicherry—the French Capital in South India, where he has been residing in 'retirement' after his withdrawal from political life—composed of persons of all nationalities who have been drawn to him for one reason or another and that, off and on, books written by him are published indicate that he has not been entirely inactive in his retirement, yet the exact nature and significance of the work that he has been doing for all these long years do not seem to have been understood even in its barest outlines; on the contrary any number of misconceptions are prevalent about him even in quarters where some appraisement of his work might be expected. There could hardly be any excuse, however, for such misconceptions, at least amongst the thoughtful and open-minded persons, now that a number of his books are available from which it is not difficult to form a fairly correct idea of the goal which, with whatever success, he has been pursuing single-mindedly for about last thirty-five years.

To the world Sri Aurobindo is known as a "Yogi". The word "Yogi" however is used to mean so many different things by different persons not only in the West but even in India—the traditional home of innumerable systems of Yoga—that it helps us very little in precisely understanding

Sri Aurobindo's work. In the minds of most of the people the word "Yoga" is usually associated with such things as the performance of extremely difficult bodily contortions and various other forms of physical austerities with a view to acquiring supernormal physical and psychical powers and even with such things as a long beard and matted hair, loin-cloth and ash-smeared body. To say therefore that Sri Aurobindo is a "Yogi" and leave the matter at that would, as generally understood, only mean that during all these last thirty-five years of his retirement he has been trying to acquire for himself supernormal physical and psychical powers by practising difficult physical feats and austerities.

Even if this more popular notion about "Yoga" is left aside and a somewhat more accurate and enlightened view of it is admitted, will it help us to have a correct estimate of Sri Aurobindo and his work? The answer to this would be both "yes" and "no"; "yes" in so far as the essential aim which Sri Aurobindo is pursuing is the same which not only all genuine systems of Yoga in India but also all spiritual and mystical systems all over the world at all times have been pursuing, viz., the realisation and union with the Divine, the Supreme Reality, the Absolute, God or whatever other name one might choose to give to That which though unknown and unattainable to our normal humanity is yet not beyond the grasp of its supreme endeavour and unflinching faith; "no" because though the essential aim is the same, there are differences of fundamental importance in the predominant purpose and method of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga and those of other traditional Yogas and mystical systems.

The primary aim of the old Yogic and mystical traditions was withdrawal and liberation from earthly existence which was taken to be inescapably subject to ignorance and sorrow; their spiritual endeavour was mainly confined to freeing the being from involvement into this earthly life subject to darkness and misery, and merging it in the eternal stillness and pure bliss of the unconditioned Spirit. No doubt this endeavour had a purifying and illumining effect on life and nature also but it was limited and partial; in fact any decisive effort towards a complete and integral transformation of life and nature was never undertaken because of the fundamental reason that it was not considered possible. Spiritual influence was able to achieve a considerably profounder purification and amelioration of life than moral and religious influence could achieve but it was found incapable of radically delivering life and nature from darkness and suffering, limitation and incapacity at their very roots. Because of this incapacity, a total transformation and divinisation of human life and nature was considered impossible and the spiritual endeavour of the past seekers was restricted chiefly to withdrawal from life into the pure existence of the Spirit.

The most significant contribution made by Sri Aurobindo to the past

spiritual traditions, which also marks a most unique and momentous departure from them even while admitting their fundamental realisations is that he not only considers a complete transformation and divine perfection of life and nature possible but also destined and inevitable. Withdrawal and liberation of being from involvement in the ignorance of nature into the free and immutable existence of self is only a first step towards that perfection and not a culmination. Securely stationed in the stillness of the pure and free self, the whole ignorant nature has to be step by step surrendered and opened to the transmuting influence of the spiritual Light and Power of the Higher Divine Nature that, descending from above, takes hold of the lower ignorant nature and gradually transforms all its energies into their divine equivalents. In principle this effort is not unique to Sri Aurobindo's Yoga; for, in one way or another, it is known to all those mystical systems which were not merely satisfied with the negative effort of escaping into the pure unconditioned self-existence of the Spirit but also made the positive effort of changing human nature by the operation of the dynamic power of the Spirit. But this positive effort, though it achieved great results, remained in the end partial and inconclusive because the range and degree of the spiritual force realised by the past seekers was not adequate to completely and decisively deliver life from ignorance and evil. Our experience of evil and ignorance however intense is superficial because the life we normally live is superficial; they have their strong roots and formidable foundations in the fathomless depths of our nature of which we are ordinarily unaware. Unless the spiritual force realised by us is competent to penetrate these depths and to dissipate completely the evil and the ignorance by dissolving their very roots and shattering their very foundations, there can be no decisive and lasting amelioration and divine reorientation of life, no secure base and field for the flowering of divine life on earth. The spiritual effort of the past was unable to carry out this momentous task, because it could not rise to that summit of the spiritual ascension where is found that range of divine power the descent of which in the earth-nature can alone bring to it complete deliverance from evil and ignorance and an integral perfection in divine life. It is because Sri Aurobindo has been able to rise to that height and contact that supreme range of divine power that he considers an integral transformation of life and nature possible. It is because he has been able to discover that new all-transmuting divine principle that he feels compelled to attempt complete divinisation of human life—an attempt which was so far considered impossible.

This new principle and range of divine power has been termed "Supermind" by Sri Aurobindo. Some of the Vedic mystics seem to have had an initial glimpse of this principle but they never considered it possible or at least never made any attempt to bring it down in the earth-nature

with a view to wholly divinise human life with its power. Sri Aurobindo alone has envisaged this possibility and has been making this attempt in his so-called seclusion. He has been making this attempt because he not only considers divinisation of human life possible but because to him it is the destined goal of the evolutionary progress to which the human race must some day arrive.

The aim which he has been pursuing all-absorbingly during the long period of seclusion is thus not the acquisition of supernormal physical or psychical powers for his own self; nor has he been concerned with his own spiritual liberation, nor has he been devoting his time to writing metaphysical treatises or poetry; his sole concern has been the spiritual evolution of the human race. To carry that evolution to its successful culmination by carrying it to and as a consequence bringing down the supramental principle of divine existence which alone can wholly transform life and making it a firmly fixed operative power in the earth-life so that the human race may be decisively delivered from its blind suffering and be wholly divinised is then the goal of Sri Aurobindo's secret endeavour, the meaning of the mystery in which people find him enveloped and the purpose of the retirement he has imposed on himself for such a long period. Surely he has not drawn away from human life into some self-fabricated illusory void; on the contrary, he has only withdrawn from the superficial field of life (which may only be a temporary condition of his work and not a permanent necessity) so as to devote all his time and energy to tackle the age-long difficulties of life at their very roots and to find the supreme remedy which will decisively free the earth existence from the persistent shadow of evil and suffering and bring to it lasting peace and happiness.

KISHOR H. GANDHI

Aspire for integral and absolute *loving consecration* by which will be established *faithfulness* and *purity*, the forerunners of *transformation.*

*

With *simple sincerity offer* your *vital* being to the Divine and the *realisation will begin.*

*

To an *aspiration for the Divine Love* supported by *faithfulness* and *sincerity in the vital*, the *Divine Love* will surely answer.

*

To keep *Agni burning* always in the *psychic centre* is an indispensable condition for the *transformation.*

REVIEWS

War, Sadism and Peace. By Edward Glover. Allen and Unwin. 9s. 6d.

DR. Glover's thesis is that the causes of war lie deep-rooted in individual human nature, and unless it is tackled there by a psychological approach, it will not matter "whether politicians build a new *Palais des Nations* every thirty years or whether they hang anti-war charms on rhododendron bushes." The increasing danger of a third war so soon after the second, in spite of the United Nations Organisation, will incline men to take the psychological approach seriously. Dr. Glover suggests the application of the teachings of psycho-analysis to the solution of the problem. The aggressive spirit which men acquire in their childhood is, according to psycho-analysis, the ultimate cause of national wars. Dr. Glover makes these fundamental points: the forces and phantasies of destruction to which frustration gives rise, the mixture of sex, aggression and guilt which emerge in sadism and masochism, the entanglement of the individual in the group, by means of which he can project his hate abroad, these are the forces which operate behind the scenes. No "rational" considerations can compete with them because "reason" is more often their tool than their master. Dr. Glover suggests that unless we spend as much time and trouble on research into infantile aggression and its control as we spend on, say, cancer research, we shall not come anywhere near the prevention of war or the establishment of enduring peace. But Dr. Glover himself is not very hopeful. In his view we are still in deepest ignorance about the real forces at work, and all we can do is to go on researching into a subject which very few people seem to take seriously. This confession of the superficial nature of the knowledge as yet arrived at by the methods of psycho-analysis is welcome, as many people seem to think that with the advent of this infant science all the mysteries of human nature have been solved. But it is not true that we are all still in deepest ignorance about human nature. The elementary truths which psycho-analysis is beginning to find most perfunctorily and imperfectly were mastered by the Indian Yogins thousands of years ago. The research which Dr. Glover suggests need not be made anew; what we have to do is to make ourselves acquainted with the Yogic lore which has been left for us by the ancient sadhakas of India and proceed to apply them to our individual and social problems according to the needs of the modern age and the stage reached by humanity through its long evolution. Dr. Glover speaks of "deepest ignorance about the real forces at work." Indian Yogins probed deeply into human nature and found

three fundamental forces operating in it which they called the *gunas*, sattwa, rajas and tamas. The aggressive spirit which he considers the root cause of war really belongs to rajas; the characteristic of sattwa is knowledge, that of rajas is action, and of tamas is inertia or inactivity; all the play of human nature proceeds by an interplay of these three gunas. The Gita says, "Greed, seeking impulsions, initiative of actions, unrest, desire—all this mounts in us when rajas increases." Rajas gives us the lust for action, but also grief, pain, all kinds of suffering. "All the ignorant and passionate seeking of man belongs to the rajasic mode of Nature." Reason, says Dr. Glover, is more often their tool than their master. Reason really belongs to the sattwa guna, and it has no assured mastery over the other gunas of nature, rajas and tamas: it is this fundamental disequilibrium which is at the root of all the problems of human life and society. However wise and rational a man may be, he can never be sure that he will not be overpowered by passions generated by rajas. "Now sattwa leads," says the Lord in the Gita, "having overpowered rajas and tamas; and now rajas, having overpowered sattwa and tamas: and now tamas, having overpowered sattwa and rajas." It is this fundamental unstability in human nature which modern psycho-analysis is dimly beginning to perceive. But it has not yet the secret of overcoming it; its service lies in stressing the problem, not in giving the solution. As to the United Nations Organisation and the hopes based on the horrors of the atom bomb, Dr. Glover expresses supreme contempt. The atom bomb, he says, even makes matters worse because even if we refrain from using it in the service of aggression, our masochism may be such that "man may satisfy his urges to bring disaster on others enduring it himself."

But what, then, is the remedy? The remedy does not lie in human nature itself as it will always remain at the mercy of the unstable play of the three gunas and no amount of analysis of the outer nature of man will enable us to discover the method of mastering it. Psycho-analysis recognises that the real forces which determine human conduct are not on the surface, they are behind and below the ordinary consciousness, but it has not yet found out any effective means of investigating these forces. Its chief method is to analyse dreams which more often than not give fanciful results, as dreams are too often complex dramatic constructions, meant to soothe our mind and give us rest during sleep. It is extremely difficult to find the elements of truth that are hidden in the stuff of which dreams are made, and as a scientific method of finding the truths of our nature, dreams are practically useless and often misleading. Dr. Glover himself has no faith in this method; and he has found no means by which the aggressive spirit in man can be eradicated; that is, in terms of Indian Psychology, he does not know how to control and discipline the rajaguna in man. He is satis-

fied with giving a practical suggestion that the aggressive spirit should be reduced as much as possible by removing frustration wherever we can and that we must bolster up the forces of love by re-establishing family solidarity, and the warmth of smaller communities. But did not human civilisation begin with these very instituitions, the family and the small community? They have certainly helped man to develop his emotional being teaching him to love his fellow beings; but at the same time they have bolstered up the aggressive spirit by developing egoism, the ego of the family, the ego of the community, which makes one regard other families and other communities as rivals and opponents. Even in the family, the love that is generated is not of a very high order, it has always the ego as its basis, fed up by the instinct of possession and domination. As a matter of fact, what men call love is a rajasic and vital passion and cannot take men out of the clutches of this guna which is the source of the aggressive spirit. Rajas and passions can be controlled to a certain extent only by the enlightened will and intelligence, that is, by the development of the sattwa guna in man and that is how human civilisation has reached its present height; but it cannot go any further by itself. Reason can put some check on our passions but can never conquer them and is liable to become itself a tool of the passions. There is a higher secret in man beyond the gunas, beyond the sattwa and the buddhi, *yo buddheḥ paratastu saḥ*: that is the Purusha as distinguished from Prakriti, the Soul as distinguished from the body, life and mind and it is by finding that Soul in us, our true being, that we can have a complete mastery over our nature and transform it by freeing it from all base movements which constitute the imperfection of man. Indian Yoga teaches us how to dissociate ourselves from the workings of our body, life and mind and find the Soul which is a portion of the Divine in us and in which we are fundamentally one with all other human beings and other creatures. Thus it is only by Yoga that humanity can hope to get rid of war and establish on the earth a reign of permanent peace and harmony. But for that humanity will have to go through a course of spiritual discipline and that is a matter of time. In the meantime the statesmen of the world must find out some external organisation which will maintain peace in the world and give freedom to all individuals as well as to all nations to grow into the purity and perfection of the spiritual divine nature. As the United Nations Organisation offers the prospect of such a machinery, it deserves the support of all, and one should not regard it with supreme contempt as Dr. Glover has done in his otherwise thought-provoking book.

A. B.

India, A Synthesis of Cultures. By Dr. Kewal Motwani. Published by Messrs. Thacker & Co., Bombay.

India Today. By Rajani Palme Dutt. Published by The People's Publishing House, Bombay.

These are two recent works on India, each exceedingly interesting in its own way. Both trace the Indian national movement up to its penultimate stage, set forth India's vital problems and indicate how to solve them. Both books purport to have been published during the current year, but judging from the contents, appear to have been finally written up in 1946. They contain no reference to the new constitution of 15th August, 1947 nor to the large-scale outbreaks of communal frenzy before and after that date. This is a pity, for the opinion of two such experts as our authors on the establishment of two almost hostile free dominions in India and their analysis of the disastrous events connected therewith would have been of great value and of immense interest. Dr. Motwani and Mr. Dutt are both writers of some distinction, both have had large cosmopolitan contacts and both are undoubted lovers of their country. Each has put in a tremendous amount of hard work in his book and spared no pains in presenting before the public an honest and well-considered study of India's vital problems. Yet there is a great difference between the two authors as far as their angle of vision, their individual outlook is concerned. Motwani is a teacher and lecturer by profession and temperament, and has examined Indian questions from the scholar's point of view. Dutt, on the other hand, has been a practical politician for a long number of years and has picked up his experience on the actual field of political struggle. His politics, moreover, is of a very positive and assertive kind, and he has not minced matters where the iniquities of the Imperialist and the Capitalist are in question. He looks upon these two as allies and fellow-conspirators, both equally antagonistic to Indian democratic aspiration. He says, 'the immediate next step before the people of India is the conquest of national independence by the ending of imperialist rule and the overthrowing of its feudal-reactionary supporters within the population—that is, the carrying through the fight for democracy'. In this fight India will have to secure the sympathy and cooperation of the British working class and the British democratic movements, if she wants to secure an easy and smooth passage to complete freedom. Not only this. India's fight being one in which 'the forces of the working class and of the peasantry are advancing, through struggle, . . . to a happier future', she will have the active sympathies and good-will of the working class and progressive forces all over the world. This is briefly Dutt's standpoint. It is quite a different proposition from the movement of Indian freedom as visualised by Dr. Motwani. While

therefore, Dutt's book is a long account of moves and counter-moves by the Imperialist-*cum*-Capitalist interest on the one hand and, on the other, by the various political parties in India, the various classes who have been waking up to political consciousness, Motwani's book is a working out of India's political destiny on the basis of her cultural heritage and her age-old ideals. We find ourselves more in sympathy with the latter's approach but realise that Dutt has written more directly and more trenchantly, and that his style generally is very much more terse and lucid than that of Motwani. In fact, the main fault of the latter's book is that it is loosely knit and somewhat too prolix in parts. Probably this is due largely to the fact that the book is a collection of lectures delivered at different times, to different people. The fault however is there and we cannot but mention it. Motwani is no doubt an idealist, but his idealism does not go far enough. A man who believes in India's soul struggling for expression and for the fulfilment of her sacred God-appointed mission in the world must, to use a common phrase, go the whole hog. He must accept the supreme truth that in the individual, as much as in the group, the Divine is fulfilling Himself, and that human life is an ever-progressive effort to manifest God on earth. Failure to accept this basic truth would seem to render all talk of India's spiritual destiny well-nigh meaningless. Our standpoint will be much clearer when we set forth what Sri Aurobindo has in his divine vision seen of the past, present and future of India's history. Yet, to do Dr. Motwani justice it must be admitted that he has visualised an integration of cultures in India,—'the gathering up of the many into the one, into every phase of the life of the individual, the group and the nation'. Though this falls short of Sri Aurobindo's clear dictum, "God always keeps for Himself a chosen country in which the higher knowledge is through all chances and dangers, by the few or the many, continually preserved, and for the present, in this Chaturyuga at least, that country is India', yet is this view a great deal ahead of the outlook of Mr. R. P. Dutt, who is not handicapped by any faith in a spiritual force guiding the destiny of nations. Not that he is not a believer in India's great past, not that he has no faith in India's glorious future. It is only this, that he does not give the Spirit a place in his political horizon. The following few lines quoted from his book indicate his outlook. "The people of India have already played a great part in world-history, not as conquerors but in the sphere of culture, thought, art and industry. The national and social liberation of the Indian people will bring great new wealth to humanity."

In fact, in the course of several chapters dealing with the resurgence of India, Dutt does not think it necessary to refer to two such dominating figures as Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. This is tantamount to suggesting that the spiritual world where these two great souls lived and worked is

a thing apart from the birth of a free nation in India. There are two very brief references in the book to Sri Aurobindo, or rather to Mr. Aurobindo Ghose. Once, as a minor provincial leader in the neo-national movement of 1906-07, and another, as one of 'the leaders of the militant national movement' who 'sought to build on a basis of Hindu religion for their agitation and to identify the national awakening with a revival of Hinduism. By this act they cut off the Moslem masses from the national movement.' Even from the purely political standpoint this remark is futile in view of the tremendous success of the Congress-Khilafat movement, fifteen years later. Mr. Dutt belongs to that school of politics which lays great stress on class consciousness and class privileges, and is not averse to starting a class struggle in order to attain class ends. India must steer clear of such cross-currents They are entirely foreign to her inherited political ideals. Though a democratic constitution was not altogether unknown in ancient India, still the typical state was a monarchy—not an absolute monarchy where the king does exactly as he likes regardless of any other considerations, but one in which the king ruled according to the eternal Dharma, that is to say, where he was really the symbol of the group-soul of his subjects and not a separate personality. Such a monarch was Rama who at the bidding of Dharma cut off the head of the ascetic Shudraka, and in deference to the wishes of his people banished his beloved queen,—both acts entirely against his own will. Between the king and his subjects in old India there was a subtle bond which manifested itself in, what may be called, a loving partnership in the administration of the state. This showed itself in the practical autonomy of the Panchayat in the villages and the various trade-guilds in the cities. These local bodies took so comprehensive and important a part in governing themselves, that it has been truly said that the ancient Hindu king was, more or less, only the War and Foreign Minister of the State. Dr. Motwani has described at length the village Panchayat, an institution that has endured through so many storms and upheavels right down to the present century. We have ourselves often worked with Panchayats in matters affecting the general welfare of villages and have realised what a fine spirit of loyalty and cooperation this institution had built up through the centuries. Of course, its success depended largely on that wonderful social organisation, the caste system. Generally speaking, the division of the community into so many castes, instead of obstructing, greatly facilitated the smooth working of the common life in the village. In some parts of the Konkan we came across a caste known as Teli, whose profession it was to grind oil. But strangely enough these Telis were not Hindus at all; they were Jews who some time in the remote past had settled down in these Hindu villages and acquired a status in the framework of village life. All these various castes, Hindus as well as non-Hindus, worked

faithfully for the community as a whole. Obviously, then, the old ideal was a happy contented life based on mutual brotherly feeling and on the loyal service rendered by each group to the whole. Mr. Dutt's political and social ideals are entirely different and are not, if accepted, likely to do any good to India even at the present time. It cannot however be denied that certain groups in this country have been stirred by the spirit of class antagonism and class struggle in the West. If so, it is because the ancient culture of the land, its conception of Dharma, is losing its hold on the people. This is what Motwani lays great stress on. He fears that the core of India's culture is in the course of disintegration and that the general aspect of Indian life has become disordered and chaotic. He does not however think that the disease is incurable, and like a zealous physician proceeds to prescribe his remedy. In this connection we quote a few very well-written lines from Dutt's book: "every stage of civilisation and culture ... from the most primitive to the most advanced, exists in India. The widest range of social, economic, political and cultural problems thus find their sharpest expression in Indian conditions. The problems of the relation and co-existence of differing races and religions; the battle against old superstitions and decaying social forms and traditions; the fight for education; the fight for liberation of women; the question of the reorganisation of agriculture and of the development of industry, and of the relationship of town and country; the issues of class conflict in the most manifold and acute forms; the problems of nationalism and socialism; all these varied issues of the modern world press forward with special sharpness and urgency in India." The description is most interesting and true but does it show that India is drifting about helplessly on the waters of life entirely at the mercy of the wind and the tide? On the contrary, it shows that a renascent India has set about tackling the many problems of her life today. If she has girded up her loins to eradicate superstitions and decadent customs, to free her women-folk, to reorganise her agriculture and industry, she is obviously on the move, and Dr. Motwani's gloomy thesis that there is no force of renascence at work in India cannot be sustained. The galaxy of great men that have been born in India and have worked for her uplift in various directions during the last century and a half shows that India, ever statically great, has assumed a definite dynamic role. How else could she have achieved even a qualified freedom? It has not dropped from the clouds. No, India worked for it, history records, steadily and tenaciously, decade after decade, till Britain could no longer withhold autonomy from her. But unfortunately with autonomy has come partition. When in the days of yore the Gods and the Titans churned the ocean of existence, there arose out of the waters not only ambrosia but also a deadly poison. The freedom we have gained today is our ambrosia, our poison is the heavy

price we have had to pay for it.

Intellectually we may well ask the question: why should the people inhabiting this three-cornered country south of the Himalayas become one nation? The answer is clear: because they have been so in their inner self for a long long time. The pious Hindu, when he sits down for his daily worship, calls upon the seven mighty rivers of India to be present in the holy water in front of him. "Om Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri, be present in this water", such is the invocation he utters. What is this but a daily remembrance of his Mother-land, the land of the seven Sindhus? The holy temples of India—from Kedarnath in the snows to Rameswaram on the Indian ocean, from Dwarka in Gujerat to Kamakshya in Assam—scattered about all over India betoken the same inherent idea of the unity of his country in the mind of the Hindu.

Sri Aurobindo says in this connection, "The whole past of India for the last two thousand years and more has been the attempt, unavailing in spite of many approximations to success, to overcome the centrifugal tendency of an extraordinary number and variety of disparate elements, the family, the commune, the clan, the caste, the small regional state or people, the large linguistic unit, the religious community, the nation within the nation. We may perhaps say that here Nature tried an experiment of unparalleled complexity and potential richness accumulating all possible difficulties in order to arrive at the most opulent result."

For a long time Nature persisted in this attempt, and when at last the problem proved insoluble she sought the expedient of foreign domination. That foreign domination, humiliating while it lasted and disastrous in its after-effects, we have now cast out and India is free again to exert herself and set her house in order. A new era has begun, an era of immense significance not only for India but for all Asia, nay, for the whole world, as both our authors have perceived.

So far India has achieved but a fissured and broken freedom, said the Master in his message of August 15, 1947. By way of remedy he suggested that we should ignore the division made along communal lines and refuse to "accept the settled fact as for ever settled or as anything more than a temporary expedient". If we do this and remember constantly in our thought the undying soul of the nation, the eternal spirit of India that none can mutilate, we shall soon see the end of these dire days of tribulation we are still passing through. Let us bear in mind Sri Aurobindo's solemn assurance. "When He wants to rise up from the mud and Narayana in man to become once again mighty and wise and blissful, then He once more pours out the Knowledge on India and raises her up so that she may give this Knowledge with its necessary consequences of might, wisdom and bliss to the whole world . . . when the movement of Knowledge again

expands and the soul of India expands with it they (Yogins in India) come forth once more and work in the world and for the world." Heartened by these noble words, let us prepare to realise our great old ideal of a spiritualised society, of a kingdom of heaven on earth. There are three essential truths of existence which we must grasp before we can realise this sublime ideal. "God, Freedom and Unity", says the Master, "three things which are one, for you cannot realise freedom and unity unless you realise God, you cannot possess freedom and unity unless you possess God." We have then to be able to see God and to possess Him before we can arrive at real unity and true freedom. In order to be able to possess God the very first thing we have got to do is to abandon our ego-pivot and cease our ego-hunt. In any effective all-round planning for the future, such as Dr. Motwani insists on, this should take the foremost place, for India must attain spirituality herself before she can fulfill her God-given mission in the world. We do not wish to belittle planning in more material directions. Man, in India as elsewhere, must have food and clothing, he must have a healthy body and a sound trained mind, but all these things are but a means to an end and that end is always life in the Spirit. Let there be no mistake; we certainly do not mean that man has to abandon earthly life and escape into a sterile asceticism. What we do mean is that man has to realise God in everything and everywhere, and that all his action in this world has to become divine action and acquire a divine meaning. Nothing is to be abandoned, everything is to be divinised. We strongly recommend this view of the integral Yogi to Dr. Motwani who already believes in a spiritual mission for India. To Mr. Dutt, who is committed to a narrower view of things we have nothing to offer beyond the respect that is always due to an honest man. In an India already torn asunder by centrifugal forces, we cannot entertain another principle of division based on class interest. Let us concentrate on realising the triune truth of God, Freedom and Unity —God first, for, without Him Freedom and Unity are meaningless.

C. C. DUTT

Published by P. Counouma
Printed at Sri Aurobindo Ashram Press, Pondicherry

To be had of:
SRI AUROBINDO LIBRARY, 369 Esplanade, Madras

328/47/1000

New Publications (in English)

	Rs.	as.
By Sri Aurobindo		
LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO—A valuable collection of unpublished letters to disciples in reply to queries.	6	8
SAVITRI : A LEGEND AND A SYMBOL		
Book I, Canto IV	1	0
Book II, Cantos I–VI	3	0
P. B. Saint-Hilaire and G. Monod-Herzen		
THE MESSAGE OF SRI AUROBINDO AND HIS ASHRAM WITH 18 PLATES	2	8
Nolini Kanta Gupta		
TOWARDS A NEW SOCIETY (Essays)	1	12
K. D. Sethna		
THE POETIC GENIUS OF SRI AUROBINDO	4	4
EVOLVING INDIA (Essays)		
T. V. Kapali Sastri		
LIGHTS ON THE VEDA	1	4
LIGHTS ON THE UPANISHADS	2	0
Anilbaran Roy		
THE WORLD CRISIS (Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future)	1	12
Nirodbaran		
SUN-BLOSSOMS (Poems)	4	8

Journals

1.	SRI AUROBINDO MANDIR ANNUAL, JAYANTI No. 6 (English)	5	0
2.	SRI AUROBINDO CIRCLE, BOMBAY—THIRD ANNUAL (English)	5	8
3.	ADITI (Hindi Quarterly)	1	4
4.	ARCHANA (Hindi Annual)	4	0
5.	DAKSHINA (Gujarati Quarterly)	1	8
6.	BARTIKA (Bengali Quarterly)	1	0
7.	SRI ARAVINDA DARSHAN (Marathi Annual)	2	0

Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry
Sri Aurobindo Library, G. T., Madras